THE HYGIENIC CHILDHOOD: MORALITY, SEGREGATION, AND THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TREATY PORT CHINA

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impact that colonial isolationist theory had upon childrearing techniques in treaty port China between 1881 and 1937. It works from the hypothesis that proper physical, moral, and identity development were all treated as components of good child health. It argues that obsessively isolationist practices resulted from the limited local hegemony held under extraterritoriality. Unable to institute far-reaching hygienic regulations, the foreign community instead chose to insulate itself in foreign concessions and exclusive resort towns. The main goal of isolationist childrearing and education was to simulate an entirely Western environment and produce young adults who were virtually indistinguishable from their peers in the metropole. With the aim of investigating colonial isolationist theory and its workings, this thesis performs an in-depth case study of Chefoo School, a highly regimented, theory-heavy boarding school in Yantai, China.

In order to discuss ways in which isolationist theory evolved over the years, this study pays special attention to a major health crisis that occurred at Chefoo School in 1902. During the Chefoo School Calamity, 13 pupils died within three days of one another. The Calamity and resulting trial received much press and inspired the school to adopt a modern approach to hygiene. It also led to a form of institution-based isolationism that shored up physical boundaries against the outside world, emphasized strict routine, and relied on authoritarian surveillance of pupils and native servants.

Lastly, this thesis turns the investigation to the domestic sphere in order to discuss the great divergence between isolationism in theory and practice. By examining eight different oral histories given by missionary kids raised in China, it explains that because strict isolationism was not feasible beyond the confines of boarding schools, most children were exposed to Chinese influences from a young age. This sort of early exposure to multicultural society coupled with strong boarding school isolationism later on caused children to develop expat identities and lessened their desires to repatriate. Thus, although isolationist theory's main goal was to prevent all forms of cross-cultural miscegenation in children, it actually ensured that they were forever marked by their time in China.

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INTRODUCTION

While the treaty port era was a time of great economic activity and cultural fusion for China's foreign community, many expats feared the damaging effects that long-term residence in the country might have on white bodies and minds. Fears of physical, moral, and identity corruption were often magnified when it came to children, and as a result, anxieties over childhood development often spurred changes within the field of colonial health. Because of their developing bodies and pliable, impressionable natures, children were perceived to be at the greatest risk for contamination. Westerners believed that this fragility entitled children to extra instruction, protection, and supervision. Thus, expat children were constantly singled out to receive the latest health theories and treatments.

Preventative measures were, of course, the most widely accepted and reproduced theories. As with most instances of colonialism around the world, China's foreign community was very tight-knit. Isolationist childrearing theories emerged quite naturally from the supra-exclusivist atmosphere that typified treaty port life. The type of informal imperialism practiced in China meant that Westerners had very little power over any noneconomic policies.[1] Their powerlessness over the creation and enforcement of wide-spread health reform caused many expats to adopt especially insular approaches to racial segregation. This thesis argues that China's foreign community implemented an extreme form of isolationist theory in order to protect their children from physical, moral, and

[1] Jurgen Osterhammel, "Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis," in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jurgen Osterhammel (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986).

identity corruption. The main goal of isolationist childrearing and education was to simulate an entirely Western environment so as to produce young adults virtually indistinguishable from their peers in the metropole. Ideas of segregation were well-suited to the highly regimented and theoretical environment of boarding schools but were not so realistic in expat homes. Isolationist theory as it was practiced in the domestic sphere actually gave children more intimate knowledge of their Chinese surroundings. While treaty port isolationism did largely meet its goal in terms of health and morality, inconsistencies between theory and practical application of isolationism ended up instilling children with decidedly expat identities.

Considerations

This thesis uses terms like "Westerners" and "foreigners" to refer to the white population living in treaty port China. These are the terms that English-speaking residents used to identify themselves at the time.[2] Primary source documents rarely, if ever, used terms like "white" or "European," and this suggests that divisions between Westerners and Chinese were about community as much as they were about race. In daily life, East Asians constantly use social-othering terms like *laowai*, *gaijin*, or *waeguk-saram* to identify strangers, outsiders, and aliens, and this Asian preoccupation with in-groups and out-groups would have greatly influenced the way that non-Chinese perceived of themselves, their communities, and their relationship to China.[3]

[2] While the foreign community was made up of several different nationalities, this thesis has chosen to focus primarily upon British and American subjects.

[3] This thesis also uses the terms "expat" and "expatriate" to reference members of China's foreign community. While it was not used in primary source documents, it does seem to capture the same feeling of cultural and locational displacement and estrangement.

The period under investigation in this thesis stretches from 1881 to 1937. These fifty-six years were the heyday of foreign boarding school education in China and marked the greatest presence of Western children. Chefoo School, the main inspiration for this study, was founded by the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1881. It served as the country's most famous institution of Western learning and greatly influenced the development of other prestigious schools like those at Lushan and Weihaiwei.[4] Before 1881, isolationist theory certainly existed in China, but it was not nearly as rigid, pervasive, and easily-enforced until institutionalized in-country schooling took root. With a few exceptions, most of the years between 1881 and 1937 were ones of relative normality for Western education and childlife in China.[5] Once war broke out between China and Japan in 1937, however, members of China's foreign community were forced to reevaluate longstanding childrearing practices. World War II greatly limited travel within the country, making annual visits home unwise. Many children became year-round boarders, and it was common for children to see their parents once every three years.[6]

Because Chefoo School has such strong bearing upon this thesis, it is important that we discuss the ways that CIM philosophies of intercultural contact affected its childrearing tactics. During the CIM's time in China, it advocated hands-on approaches to proselytization, encouraging missionaries to learn the language, dress in native garb, and live among the people. On the other hand, there was also much pressure to maintain Western identities, hygienic practices, and standards of living. CIM members often

[4] Weihaiwei School began in 1901, while Kuling American School (KAS) at Lushan was founded in 1916.
[5] The largest disruptive event during this period was, of course, the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1900). Many children were sent away from China during this time.
[6] World War II greatly disrupted normal school life. Students at Chefoo School were even interned from 1942 until the end of the war. For more on this topic, see Christina Spink's dissertation on the Chefoo-Weihsien Internment. Christina D. Spink, "An Oral History Case Study on the Co-construction of Schooling at the Chefoo School and in Weihsien Internment Camp" (Dissertation, Widener University, 2000).

struggled to balance the two contradictory approaches, and the introduction of children into the equation made things impossibly more complicated. Could foreign children grow into healthy adults in the midst of such identity confusion? Many felt that foreign children, with their delicate developing identities, simply were not ready for the psychic stress. Only adults, with their fully developed identities and deep roots in Western culture, could walk the CIM's thin line without losing themselves to China completely. Thus, Chefoo School acted as a weigh-station of sorts, inculcating children with strong Western characters until they were mature enough to join the missionary movement themselves.

Historiography

This thesis attempts to respond to lines of inquiry in several different historical fields. First, it has been heavily influenced by important scholarship within the growing field of imperialism and colonial studies. Histories of colonialism, especially medical histories, have emphasized the West's obsession with disease prevention and physical segregation. Dane Kennedy's book, *Islands of White*, provided this thesis with an incredibly versatile theoretical framework. It talks at great length about the fluidity of identity formation within isolated settler communities, arguing that white settlers developed new, shared cultural identities in opposition to surrounding native communities.[7] This thesis applies ideas about colonial racial segregation to childhood socialization and identity formation, arguing that boarding schools unintentionally instilled children with expat identities. Rather than seeing this as a boon of the isolationist system, it was eventually seen as a major failing.

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[7] Dane Keith Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

This thesis has also been influenced by historians who have written of medical knowledge as a form of power. In *Colonial Pathologies*, Warwick Anderson argues that Western medicine is, in all areas, fundamentally a colonizing force. He devotes much of his book to examining the ways that medical officers used health—especially hygienic directives—to control and alter the behavior of indigenous populations.[8] This thesis takes a different tack, arguing that the limited sovereignty enjoyed beyond the purview of foreign concessions left members of the foreign community with feelings of powerlessness and anxiety.

As the richest source of scholarship into colonialism and settler culture, South Asian historiography has been an invaluable source for this thesis. Works on Indian hill stations, in particular, were quite useful. In *The Magic Mountains*, Dane Kennedy writes about the mass exodus to hill stations by women and children—members of colonial society who were thought to be especially vulnerable to bodily corruption. In *Empire Families*, Elizabeth Buettner does an in-depth analysis of children's health in India. Buettner argues that, up until the 1930s, medical experts believed that living in India had a decidedly negative impact upon the bodies of British children.[9] Both of these works deeply impacted the direction of this thesis, which investigates how isolationist theory interacted with theories of child development and acclimatization. It expands on the idea of physical corruption, however, arguing that fears of moral and identity corruption were also strong motivating factors behind isolationist agendas.

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[8] Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
[9] Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Finally, this thesis endeavors to speak to recent scholarship being done in Chinese hygienic history. Ruth Rogaski, among other historians, has contributed much to the field through her work on *Hygienic Modernity*.[10] In it, she writes that hygienic development in China was a multinational affair, with participants in the treaty port system exercising huge influence over Chinese conceptions of hygiene. Rogaski's argument that hygiene has always been inseparably connected with modernity, sovereignty, and institutional discipline has had great bearing upon the first two chapters of this thesis.[11] This thesis applies the same concepts to Western education in China, arguing that a reputation for lax, unregulated hygienic practices could destroy a school's credibility.

Summary

This thesis is organized around two main themes: isolationism in theory and isolationism in practice. Investigating colonial health theory in this vein can be very useful because it allows us to clearly distinguish between intention and result. In this way, we are able to discuss the psychology behind isolationist theory without diminishing the importance of actions and historical realities. The first two chapters of this work examine isolationism in theoretical situations, while the final chapter discusses its practical applications.

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[10] For other influential works on the emergence of Chinese modern hygiene, see Carol Benedict, *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Charlotte Furth, "Introduction: Hygienic Modernity in Chinese East Asia," in *Health and Hygiene in Chinese East Asia: Policies and Publics in the Long Twentieth Century*, ed. Qizi Liang and Charlotte Furth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); B. J. Andrews, "Tuberculosis and the Assimilation of Germ Theory in China, 1895-1937," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 52, no. 1 (1997): 114-57; Philippa Levine, "Modernity, Medicine and Colonialism: the Contagious Diseases Ordinances in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements," *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities.* 6, no. 3 (1999): 675-705.

[11] Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

The first chapter examines changing perceptions of health and disease in treaty port China and argues that the limited local sovereignty inherent in the extraterritoriality system made isolationist childrearing especially attractive. It introduces Chefoo School as a theory-heavy institution devoted to protecting children from physical, moral, and identity corruption. The second chapter performs an in-depth case study of the 1902 Chefoo School Calamity, a health crisis that claimed 13 young lives and culminated in a well-publicized trial. Although the Calamity likely occurred as a result of poor administrative decisions, much blame ended up being assigned to Chinese servants and the Chinese environment in general. The event created lasting change within the school. It caused administrators to shore up boundaries against Chinese influences and adopt stricter, more modern hygienic practices. The third and final chapter discusses the practical application of isolationist childrearing techniques within domestic settings. By citing eight different oral histories of missionary children raised in China, it argues that multicultural childhoods, coupled with boarding school isolationism, actually instilled children with expat identities and impeded their ability to successfully repatriate.

CHAPTER 1

MORALITY, HYGIENE, AND SEGREGATION: THE THEORY OF IMPERIAL CHILDREARING

Many foreigners living in treaty port China believed that colonial environments had strong corrupting influences upon Western bodies—and with good reason. Numerous demographic studies of Europeans in colonial settings point to frighteningly high mortality rates during the 19th and 20th centuries.[12] Anxieties about dying far from home or being maimed by exotic diseases made foreigners especially cognizant of health theories and preventative measures. Fears of bodily corruption were often magnified when it came to child health, and in several different primary source accounts, we see that fears over childhood development often spurred change within the field of colonial health. Because of their ever-changing bodies and moral understandings, children were perceived to be at the greatest risk for contamination. Westerners believed that children were the most vulnerable members of colonial society, and because of this, their physical and spiritual wellbeing received extra attention. Expat children—particularly those who lived near Western settlements or attended international schools—were often singled out as recipients of the latest colonial health theories and treatments.

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[12] Philip D. Curtin, *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Expat children who spent their impressionable years in a tropical climate, surrounded by Chinese caregivers and Eastern moral influences, were seen to be at a dangerous disadvantage to their peers in the metropole. Exposure to poor environmental factors during childhood was believed to have irreversible affects upon developing minds and bodies. Westerners feared that without intervention, their children would grow up to be sallow-skinned, morally bankrupted invalids. Colonial theories on child health sought to allay these anxieties by encouraging Western adults to reinforce boundaries between East and West. Childrearing strategies largely revolved around segregating children from Chinese influences, and it became commonplace to sequester them in Western boarding schools with cold, brisk climates. Parents believed that, by surrounding their children with strict Western ideals and climates that aped Northern Europe, they could keep their children safe from disease and delinquency. By examining the strict, sheltered, and highly institutionalized upbringings of Western children in China, we can learn much about the motivations behind colonial health theories. The primary source documents suggest that theory-heavy institutions and childrearing strategies grew from feelings of powerlessness and displacement that existed within China's small foreign community. They also highlight fears that Westerners had over the dangerous effects of long-term residence in China. Some authorities believed that overfamiliarity with China's environment and people would lead to a slippery slope, causing social and moral uprightness to rapidly erode with each successive generation. By encouraging expats to carefully oversee international schools, childrearing strategies of seclusion allowed Westerners to reclaim a sense of hegemony over their own health reality, thus making long-term residence in China more palatable to families. By revisiting various colonial

discourses, diaries, and school biographies, this chapter will shed further light on Western anxieties over proper health, morality, and identity and examine the role that theory played in the lives of British and American children living in China during the heyday of the treaty port system.

Changing Perceptions of Health and Disease in Treaty Port China

The British were present in Asia as early as the 17th century, establishing trading networks and collaborating with local communities. It was not until the mid-19th century, however, that large numbers of British missionaries and entrepreneurs began to pour into the country. Foreign companies began investing great sums of money into Chinese business endeavors. The unique features of Western imperialism in China—extraterritoriality, unequal treaties, and a large network of treaty ports—meant that Westerners had a great deal of economic autonomy within the country. Although they reaped great financial benefits from China, they were not saddled with the responsibility of administering the government itself. Western missionaries and entrepreneurs flocked to the country, lured by the promise of hassle-free, newly opened markets.

The sudden boom in the Western expatriate population after 1895 gave rise to many imperial anxieties about the effects of living in China.[13] Echoing the concerns of imperial participants the world over, Westerners feared that long-term residence in the country would subject their bodies, morals, and cultural identities to irreparable damage. Studying imperial anxieties within the context of treaty port China can teach us a great deal about the development of modern Western identities. Western imperialism in China

[13] Robert Bickers, "Shanghailanders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937," *Past & Present*, no. 159 (1998): 176.

was a multinational endeavor, with British, American, French, Russian, German, Italian, and Japanese co-imperialists. With so many multinational powers concentrated in such relatively small spaces, a strong binary soon developed in the way that expats articulated differences between China and the West on ideas of health, morality, and identity. By contrasting themselves with the Chinese, foreigners became convinced that the West was clean, healthy, and enlightened. Conversely, they began characterizing China as exotic, charming, scientifically backward, and ambiguously dangerous. These generalizations about identity continued to influence Western self-perceptions and definitions of "otherness" well into the 20th century.

One of the most pressing anxieties about China concerned bodily corruption. Western expatriates experienced high mortality rates in China, especially during the 19th century. Diseases like malaria, cholera, and typhoid made it difficult for many Westerners to maintain long-term residence in the country. Amateur scientists and imperial commentators became increasingly obsessed with preserving the health of colonial bodies, and throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, several theories were used to explain these high mortality rates.

Miasma theory was, by far, the most influential. For hundreds of years, medical practitioners believed that illnesses were spread by toxic, malodorous air.[14] This theory only became more widespread in the 19th century as large numbers of people began crowding into Europe's cities. Large-scale urbanization and its accompanying pollution further perpetuated the belief that noxious smells acted as vectors for disease. It should come as no surprise, then, that miasma theory held such sway among China's foreign community since foreign residences were largely limited to narrow sections within treaty

[14] Lois N. Magner, *A History of Medicine* (New York: M. Dekker, 1992). 305.

port cities. Although Westerners contributed to urban pollution, they often blamed the Chinese and their sanitation deficiencies for creating dangerous miasmatic nuisances. For example, in *The Treaty Ports of China and Japan*, published in 1867, Western observers argued that Tianjin's local canal system was responsible for the spread of disease. They wrote that, "During the hot days of summer the stench arising therefrom is overpowering, and has doubtless contributed to great mortality among the natives during the prevalence of epidemics."[15] To foreign noses, 19th century China seemed to be full of strange, unpleasant smells—miasmas that could destroy the health of delicate Western bodies.[16] Children, with their small easily compromised bodies, were thought to be particularly susceptible to miasmatic influences.

Western health commentators believed that the hot, tropical Chinese climate that made wet-rice agriculture possible also bred a host of unhealthful miasmas. In addition, many climatologists believed that China's humid summers could have irreversible, adverse effects upon Western bodies. Many scientists in the 19th century believed that the hot climates of Asia and Africa would damage the nervous system, deteriorate the blood, and ultimately result in a degenerate race.[17] This theory was especially troubling to families who had spent several generations in the tropics. Westerners also believed that long-term residence in China could lead to moral corruption, especially among children. They theorized that prolonged exposure to heat could have negative impacts upon both the body and mind. Many medical specialists feared that growing up in hot environments would cause the unnatural and premature onset of puberty and sexual desire in their

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[15] Nicholas Belfield Dennys et al., *The Treaty Ports of China and Japan: A Complete Guide to the Open Ports of Those Countries* (London: Trübner, 1867). 473.
[16] Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*: 83-85.
[17] Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*: 31.

children.[18] In addition to this, they worried that the hypersexual indigenous inhabitants of tropical regions would corrupt children's moral sensibilities.

Although the groundbreaking publications of Robert Koch in 1890 converted many experts to the germ theory camp, miasma theory and climatology continued to color colonial perceptions of health far into the 20th century. It certainly took several years for Koch's ideas to be disseminated to the general public, and even then, ideas about unhealthy climates and dirty air were firmly engrained. In a letter written by missionary Margaret Simkin, for example, we see that misperceptions about climate and its effects on the bodies of children were still quite prevalent among China-dwelling Westerners as late as 1925. While discussing the advised evacuation of all mountain resorts due to antiforeign movements, she wrote that "people were loath to leave unless it should become absolutely necessary, because the fearful heat and other conditions of summer travel are apt to seriously endanger the health of young children."[19] Stigmas regarding air contamination, noxious humidity, and the dangers of living in close proximity to natives were already pervasive by the dawn of the 20th century. As germ theory and hygienic theory began to capture the public's imagination, climatic and miasmatic theories of disease were not entirely forgotten. The old paradigm still influenced the way that new discoveries and treatments in public health and hygiene were conceptualized. And although methods of diagnosis became more advanced, treatments and preventative measures improved very little. Thus, endorsements of quarantine and racial separation became even more visible under the new system.

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[18] Marjorie Levine-Clark, *Beyond the Reproductive Body: the Politics of Women's Health and Work in Early Victorian England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2004). 30-31.
[19] Margaret T. Simkin, *Letters from Szechwan, 1923-1944* (Pasadena, CA: Friend in the Orient Committee, Pacific Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1978). 42-43.

With the popularization of germ theory and hygienic theory, discourses on health became heavily imbued with moral language, and anxieties over physical and moral corruption became closely entwined. Moral language had a strong presence in health discourses for three important reasons. First, the rigorous and physically shocking changes experienced by Westerners in China had led many expats to adopt strict health codes centered on moderation in diet, drink, manners, and dress. Many members of the foreign community believed that Christian self-restraint and prudence were important to long-term survival.[20] This approach to life in China was further reified as modern hygienic theory took root. Second, morality and hygiene were seen as being inseparably connected because they both acted as important symbols of Western cultural identity and its intellectual superiority over "backward" native systems. As mentioned earlier, maintaining good health and a clean, hygienic outward appearance allowed Westerners to distinguish themselves from their Chinese neighbors and develop a contrasting identity. By combining health and morality into one, it became easier for adults to conceptualize their identities and ensure that their children did likewise. Finally, the large number of medical missionaries in the country greatly colored views of health at the time. Personal cleanliness was often used to indicate moral fortitude within the missionary population, and the two virtues were seen to be very closely related. Emphasizing the moral aspect of modern hygiene and Western medicine also served as a successful proselytizing tool for missionaries. Missionaries' clean, educated demeanors allowed them to claim positions of respect within Chinese society, and their life-saving medical assistance helped win many thankful converts. For these reasons and more, China's foreign community often

[20] David N. Livingstone, "Tropical Climate and Moral Hygiene: The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 32, no. 1 (1999): 108.

saw morality as simply another aspect of physical health. Indeed, for the purposes of this chapter and succeeding chapters, it is important to keep in mind that, as germ theory rose to prominence, health and morality became increasingly and inextricably linked in the minds of China's foreign expat community.

Ultimately, advances in germ theory did little to allay fears about the corrupting influences of colonial life. Instead, they simply highlighted existing anxieties over mixing freely with native populations and reinforced deep-seated feelings of powerlessness within China's foreign community.[21] Expats became more cognizant than ever of the delicate, symbiotic relationship that they shared with their neighbors. Hygiene became a buzzword in local health campaigns, with commentators blaming the hygienic backwardness of the Chinese for devastating epidemics and disease outbreaks. Writing in 1902, one observer theorized that the use of night soil in traditional Chinese agriculture led to the poisoning of Westerners' wells and created infected regions unsuitable for foreign habitation. Pointing to parallels between wind patterns and cases of summer dysentery, he argued that "the disgusting methods the Chinese have for fertilising their fields and market gardens are largely instrumental in the spread of disease germs."[22] Although expats were hyper-aware of the far-reaching, potentially damaging influence that Chinese hygienic habits could have on their well-being, they had little recourse to enact change on a regional scale. Decisions over fertilizer, public works projects, or local hygienic policy lay solely with their Chinese neighbors. The extraterritorial nature of

[21] Because it was not uncommon for diagnostic capabilities to outpace treatment success, expat communities also gained the mixed blessing of knowing with a higher certitude what had killed their loved ones. The shift to germ theory made foreigners in China further preoccupied with determining the exact cause of disease outbreaks. And more often than not, those causes were traced back to local failings. After all, if disease did not arise from environmental factors, its most obvious origin was the Chinese population at large.

[22] "Weihaiwei: From Our Own Correspondent," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, December 10, 1902.

foreign administrations in treaty port China meant that Westerners ultimately lacked the authority to institute city-wide hygiene campaigns. This situation led expats to direct hygiene improvement efforts inward toward the small spaces where they did have sovereign control: their homes, schools, and foreign concessions.[23] The initial aims of insular health measures safeguarded the health of youngsters growing up in China by erecting physical boundaries. Those lines of demarcation proliferated deeper cultural boundaries, ensuring that children developed moral, healthy Western identities as they grew.

Childhood Segregation: A Solution to a Colonial Logistics Dilemma

With the double-edged sword of physical and moral corruption hanging overhead, some expat parents living in Asia would choose to send their children to the metropole for proper educations.[24] In Europe, children could escape unhealthful tropical climates, cultivate Western manners, and surround themselves with Christian playmates and values. Sending them abroad, however, created separation anxiety among children and made parents less inclined to live in China for long periods of time. Commenting on the tendency to send children away to England, a school administrator from Weihaiwei School for European Boys argued that the practice often caused irreparable damage to family unity. He wrote that

> Many people living in the East think they do the best thing sending their children home. They consider that the social, moral and physical conditions of life out here are an effectual barrier to their proper education. So drastic a step may be a stern necessity, but at the best it can only be a choice of evils. To quote from my own experiences,—they sent me from India when I was eleven. I scarcely knew my parents when I saw them again. Friends, and even near relatives, cannot take the

[23] Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*: 132-33.
[24] This was particularly popular among colonists in India.

> place of father and mother and it is too much to expect that natural affection will survive the separation of years. It may be necessary, but it is hard necessity, whether the question be considered from the point of view of the parent, or of the child.[...] I have no hesitation in stating that, in spite of certain difficulties, a thoroughly sound preparatory education, say, up to the age of fourteen, can be given [in China]: and that there should be no necessity for removing a mere child from home influence just at the period of life when a mother's love and a father's counsel are most needed.[25]

Faced with such terrible, long-term separations, most Western parents in China decided against sending their children to Europe. This was, in part, due to the negative experiences of past generations of India-born children fostered in Europe. Social class also played a part in the decision-making process. Missionaries were particularly apt to keep their children in-country because of the high monetary costs that accompanied international travel, board, and childcare. Whether they wished to or not, most missionary parents simply could not afford to send their children abroad.

The other options available to parents were teaching children at home, educating them in small, parent-run schools, or sending them to large international boarding schools near foreign population centers. Although homeschools and small rural schools were acceptable alternatives, especially for children living in isolated regions, they often had fewer academic resources and rarely kept children past middle school.[26] Because most missionary organizations subsidized school tuition and travel costs, it became increasingly affordable to send children further away to boarding schools with higher educational standards. As China's foreign population grew, so did health resort towns with the capacity to support large-scale international schools like Chefoo School and Kuling American School. The proliferation of these exclusive international schools in the

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[25] "Weihaiwei School: Children Sent to England," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, August 14, 1903, 343.

[26] We will revisit these home-schooled and country-educated children in Chapter 3 when we discuss colonial health in practical, field situations.

mountains of Jiangxi or along the bracing Shandong coast meant that children grew up in climates similar to those of Northern Europe. Sending children to these highly regimented schools also allowed parents to remotely determine and control the physical and moral development of their children and forgo the heavy emotional costs of years-long separations. School administrators were able to implement colonial health theories that essentially quarantined children from China. As they grew and developed internal rules and traditions, China's international boarding schools became model examples of isolationist theory and developed into hyper-Western buffers against the corrupting influences of Asia. By attending these theory-heavy schools, children were, hypothetically, able to escape physical and moral corruption.

In the next section, we will see how British parents and school administrators in China made in-country education a healthful, desirable solution to imperial anxieties of corruption by establishing Western boarding schools that epitomized ideas of moral and hygienic segregation. The strict, isolationist nature of these large boarding schools allowed them to act as colonial laboratories of modernity in which theories on health could be tried and tested.[27] For a closer look at this phenomenon, this chapter will now introduce the case of the China Inland Mission School at Chefoo.

The Case of the China Inland Mission School at Chefoo

In 1858, the Treaty of Tientsin ended the Second Opium War and opened China to further Western encroachment. It made it legal for missionaries to travel into the

[27] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1997). 5.

country's interior, proselytize, and build churches.[28] Taking these new liberties to heart, James Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in 1865 as an overseas Christian missionary society. Because the CIM was established as a nondenominational, multinational fellowship, it often served as a unifying force among the English-speaking expatriate community in China.[29] It also became the most influential missionary organization in China.[30]

Because of the CIM's ambitious desire to send missionaries into China's isolated interior, a few large problems began to emerge in the 1870s. First, ill-health among CIM missionaries often crippled the work in many areas. Tropical diseases and travel-fatigue plagued CIM missionaries, leading to high mortality rates—especially among new arrivals.[31] Second, since members of the CIM were encouraged to marry and proselytize in remote areas, the children of missionary unions often lived hundreds or thousands of kilometers from schools or other Western children. Leaders of the mission felt that homeschooling was detrimental to the goals of the CIM because it forced mothers to divide their time between evangelical work and childrearing.[32] Hudson Taylor believed that, in order for the CIM to continue to grow and thrive, it would need to build medical and educational facilities in an accessible location. With these considerations in mind, Taylor established both a sanitarium and a school at Chefoo (modern-day Yantai) in 1881.

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[28] Great Britain, "Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Commerce, Signed at Tientsin, 26 June 1858, with Related Conventions, Correspondence, Memorials and Dispatches, 1860-64," (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1971), Articles VIII, IX, and XII.

[29] The CIM was mainly comprised of English missionaries, but it also accepted Irish, Scottish, American, Canadian, and Australian missionaries.

[30] Cultivating a friendly relationship with CIM administrators often proved very valuable to explorers and entrepreneurs who wished to travel beyond China's coastal regions. To learn more about explorers and their interactions with the CIM, see Erik Mueggler, *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

[31] Alvyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007). 136.

[32] Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Mission* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003). 156.

The China Inland Mission School tended to admit the children of CIM missionaries, but it also accepted children of entrepreneurs and non-CIM missionaries. The school excluded nonwhite students from attending.[33] Although the school was in close proximity to Chefoo city and surrounded by Chinese countryside, its students had very few interactions with Chinese people. This was by design. By quarantining children from China proper, school administrators and parents were seeking to clearly demarcate the division between East and West. In doing so, they hoped to protect their vulnerable children from the corrupting influences of growing up in China.

Of course, the most obvious way that they did this was by separating children bodily from Chinese populations. The threats of tropical diseases, unpleasant miasmas, and heat corruption were some of the most pressing reasons for sequestering children at the CIM School. It was no coincidence that Hudson Taylor chose to build Chefoo School adjacent to Chefoo Sanatorium. Situated on the Shandong coast in Northern China, Chefoo enjoyed brisk winds and temperatures reminiscent of Europe. In his description of Chefoo's environs, Chefoo School teacher Gordon Martin wrote that "the air was dry and bracing, free from malaria and other diseases common in the damp heat of central and south China."[34] Chefoo was the ideal resort town for climate-conscious colonials. What better place to establish a school for vulnerable growing children than a resort town?

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[33] Many CIM missionaries were involved in establishing and administering native schools within Chefoo city, but there was absolutely no cross-contact between foreign Chefoo School students and their Chinese peers. In her oral history, Martha Phillips talks about the strict prohibitions against contact with these outside children. She explains that even mixed-race children born to Chinese fathers and Russian mothers were barred from attending the school. Furthermore, Chefoo School's administration did not allow its resident doctor to treat such children due to fears regarding disease importation. Teachers were able to work around this rule of no-contact, however, by treating mixed-raced children with school-provided medicines on their days off. For more on this topic, see Martha Henrietta Philips. Interview by Paul Ericksen. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, September 26, 1985. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

[34] Gordon Martin, *Chefoo School 1881-1951: A History and Memoir* (Braunton, UK: Merlin, 1990). 20.

Interestingly enough, Chefoo School was often host to childhood epidemics of measles, scarlet fever, and mumps.[35] The school's proximity to the missionary sanatorium was often touted as a positive influence upon the health of Chefoo students. It is more likely, however, that the sanatorium actually facilitated the spread of diseases into the neighboring school.

Chefoo School supposedly functioned as a barrier against moral corruption and the spread of Chinese values into the student population. Stanley Houghton, a school administrator, argued that Chefoo School was a safe haven against the corrupting influences of un-Christian lifestyles and sensibilities. He wrote that

> The foreign child born in the interior of China is handicapped from the start. Cut off from contact with western children of his own age, he may spend much of his time with the Chinese. From his Chinese companions, he may learn much that is undesirable, if not actually harmful, for him to know. Unless his parents give considerable time and care to his upbringing, he may receive, through eye or ear, bad impressions which time will never obliterate. The low standard of purity and lack of delicacy amongst the Chinese undoubtedly affect some children more than others, but the danger is very real.[36]

Administrators hoped to instill children with Christian values, and they were quite aware of the difficulties inherent in performing such an endeavor while surrounded by the so-called pagan influences of Chinese society. Because of this, administrators wrote constantly about their desire to "win [children] for Christ" or ensure that children entered "into vital touch with the Lord Jesus Christ by being born again."[37] To this end, school administrators formulated a rigorous moral curriculum. The principal offered morning prayers every day, and students were expected to participate in daily scripture study

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[35] Stanley Houghton, Edith B. Harman, and Margaret Pyle, *Chefoo* (London; Philadelphia: The China Inland Mission, 1931). 46-47.
[36] Ibid., 21.
[37] Ibid., 11, 19.

classes.[38] Every Thursday evening, many boys from the upper school participated in a teacher-sponsored prayer club. A teacher or a student leader would suggest several prayer topics—missionary work, school morality, the welfare of past graduates—and then each member of the group would take turns praying aloud. In addition to this, the school would hold daily staff prayer meetings about the welfare of individual students and school departments.[39] By constantly emphasizing the Christian duties of Chefoo students, administrators wanted to not only "purify" children of Chinese moral contamination, but also nurture future generations of CIM missionaries. And in this endeavor, they were often highly successful. Many Chefoo alumni, like Alfred James Broomhall, went on to become active members of the China Inland Mission.

Finally, by confining their children to Chefoo School, parents sought to reinforce boundaries between East and West and maintain imperial identities. They did not want their children to adopt a Chinese identity. Therefore, the CIM School attempted to mold its students into good imperial subjects through a variety of methods. Houghton commented that Chefoo School had the ability to displace Chinese identities that CIM students adopted in early childhood. He wrote that "Once in the Preparatory School, John—for now he no longer answers to the Chinese name by which he has been known—finds himself in an entirely new world."[40] Chefoo School adopted several measures in order to ensure that students developed a thoroughly Western identity. Children, for example, were not allowed to leave the school by themselves. They always went into Chefoo city in large groups and were made to march in orderly lines. Strict rules about group excursions served to reinforce feelings of foreign solidarity and limit physical

[38] Ibid., 15.
[39] Ibid., 18-19.
[40] Ibid., 10.

interactions with the local people.[41] Preserving a sense of shared Western identity among expat children was incredibly important to the preservation of colonial order. Schools like Chefoo excelled at nurturing Western identities by enforcing strict no contact rules, and adopting devout religious curriculums.

Conclusion

The experiences of Western children in China were very different from those of other colonial children. At first glance, it may seem strange that parents were not more concerned about sending their children "home" to the metropole for their education. This practice was both common and highly prestigious in India and the Dutch East Indies. However, children born in China were usually raised in China. The practice of keeping children in-country seems to contradict all Western beliefs about the corrupting influences of the colonies. Why, then, did most parents refuse to send their children away to Europe? This chapter argues that, in addition to the reasons already mentioned, parents in China were simply more successful at nurturing and enforcing the concept of cultural quarantine. The co-imperialistic nature of expatriate life in China helped to create a very strict binary between East and West. Western parents were able to immerse themselves in a multicultural treaty port lifestyle preoccupied with excluding unwanted Chinese neighbors. In Shanghai, for example, signs at the local park are reported to have said "no dogs or Chinese allowed."[42] The insulating nature of treaty ports themselves made it very easy to feel that it was possible to import a piece of the West into Asia while excluding

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[41] Moses Chu, *The Development of Education in Chefoo, 1865-1945* (Soudersburg, PA: Moses Chu, 1991). 19, 22.
[42] Bickers, "Shanghailanders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937."

all else. The success of multicultural Western boarding schools grew out of this mindset. Co-imperialist parents felt much more secure in their ability to isolate their children and reproduce European environments because of their experiences with treaty port life. We see many examples of this through investigating Chefoo School.

In the next chapter, we will further scrutinize health and moral practices at Chefoo School by studying the Chefoo School Calamity of 1902. In doing so, we will see how Western health theories stood up against a large-scale and well-publicized health crisis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY IN CRISIS: THE CHEFOO SCHOOL CALAMITY

On July 6th, 1902, students and teachers at the Chefoo Boy's School gathered in the school's dining hall for an early dinner of chicken pies. Within four hours of the meal, Gershom Broomhall, age 11, would die exhibiting severe complications of the digestive tract.[43] From there, it was a scene of death in the boarding school. Eight more boys died in the next 24 hours, and a further three died on July 8th. On the 9th, Cyril Molloy became the 13th and final victim of the epidemic. *The North China Herald* quickly began referring to the incident as the "Chefoo School Calamity."[44] This tragic event became the center of a wider debate within China's foreign community about boarding school health standards, colonial dietary guidelines, and the efficacy of early 20th-century diagnostic methods. A well-publicized trial held by the British Consular Court directed a great deal of scrutiny toward the school's outdated hygienic policies. Although China's corrupting environment was touched upon, the lion's share of blame went toward the school's administration for its failure to insulate students from outside contamination.

This chapter argues that the rise of state-endorsed health projects and the rapid growth of China's expat community around the turn of the century made it increasingly

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[43] "The School Fatality," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 16, 1902, 115-16.
[44] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 30, 1902.

important to adopt stricter, more regulated strategies of hygienic policy. By studying the Chefoo School Calamity, an event in which outdated Western regimens of health failed quite spectacularly, we will gain a more intimate glimpse into the isolationist changes that were occurring in treaty port China at the time. The public nature of the Calamity and subsequent trial gave the expat community an open forum through which it could air grievances and make calls for change. Greatly influenced by those critiques and the tense political situation of the time, Chefoo School chose to tighten the boundaries that separated it from the Chinese environment.

The Chefoo School Calamity occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, and as such, it is important to note the great influence that the Chinese antiforeign, anti-Christian movement had upon isolationist strategies. Prior to the Calamity, Shandong had been the birthplace of the Boxer Rebellion and was the site of much bloodshed. Chefoo itself suffered only a week of Boxer occupation. Members of the foreign community and school boarders, however, were still deeply affected by rumors and the climate of fear that prevailed during the time. Chefoo students, for example, slept with pillow cases beside their beds that held a full change of clothes so that they could flee at a moment's notice. The CIM alone reported the deaths of 58 missionaries and 21 mission children as a result of the rebellion.[45] In the aftermath of such great loss and displacement, foreign powers created a more united front against China.[46] Members of the Western community redoubled segregationist efforts, seeking to further remove themselves from the dangerous influence of China's native population.

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[45] Martin, *Chefoo School 1881-1951: A History and Memoir*: 45-46.
[46] Robert A. Bickers and Tiedemann R. G., eds., *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 161.

Into this fraught political climate came the Chefoo School Calamity. The year 1902 served as a watershed moment in the history of the school and led to a tightening of health surveillance in China's Western boarding schools in general. This chapter will first give background for the case study by providing a general narrative of the Calamity as laid out by *The North China Herald* and official CIM publications.[47] From there, it will perform an in-depth analysis of pertinent hygienic issues raised by the trial, address the political motives surrounding the official verdict of cholera, and discuss the long-term and short-term impacts that the Calamity had on the expatriate community in China.

The Chefoo School Calamity

From its establishment in 1881, Chefoo School had little difficulty recruiting pupils. Its mission to provide a good Christian education within China attracted the sons of missionaries, sea captains, and businessmen. By 1891, the school's enrollment had risen to 70 students and it was recognized as one of the healthiest, safest alternatives to sending children to Europe.[48] Its reputation as a healthful, moral, middle-class refuge led to a rapid expansion in enrollment over the years. It added a girl's wing to the school in 1886. A preparatory school eventually followed in 1897, and by 1902, the school had the capacity to teach 180 fulltime pupils.[49] In addition to day students and weekday boarders, the boy's school also had 52 boarders on weekends.[50] The School Calamity would

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[47] It is important to note that in "China's Millions," the CIM's annual periodical, *The North China Herald* was referred to as the ultimate authority on the School Calamity. Thus, the report in "China's Millions" simply gives a CIM-centered view of *The North China Herald*'s commentary.
[48] A.W. Douthwaite, "General Survey of C.I.M Work in Shan-tung," *China's Millions* (1892): 75.
[49] China Inland Mission, "The Province of Shan-tung," *China's Millions* (1902): 110; China Inland Mission, "Evening Meeting: Mr. W. L. Elliston," *China's Millions* (1886); E.B.E. Murray, "The China Inland Mission Schools, Chefoo," *China's Millions* (1897).
[50] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, August 6, 1902, 263.

significantly reduce that number and challenge the expat community's faith in international boarding schools. Out of the 52 boarders in the boys' school on that Sunday in 1902, 13 would die. This section will talk in more depth about the School Calamity that occurred at Chefoo Boys' School from July 6th to July 9th.

At Chefoo School, it had long been customary for the native cooks to prepare the Sunday afternoon meal ahead of time on Saturday night so that they could attend Sunday church services. The weekend of July 5th and 6th proved to be one of the first especially hot periods during the summer of 1902, and this unexpected spike in temperature had a huge impact on what happened next.[5152] The day before the incident, the cook prepared six chicken pies. Once they had cooled, she stored them in the school's icebox with the intention of serving them at 4:00 pm the next day for Sunday tiffin.[53] Because of the size of the icebox, the cook was obliged to place four pies in a lower compartment and two pies in an upper compartment. The unseasonably hot weather caused a large portion of the ice in the ice box to melt before the Sunday afternoon meal, but the native kitchen staff noted no obvious irregularities with the pies. Halfway through the meal, however, several students complained that two of the pies appeared to have "gone off" or "fermented." Upon closer inspection, the school matron, Rose Basnett, noticed that the remains of one of the pies "were fermented, that is the gravy was not set" and there were

[51] "The School Fatality," 116.
[52] In the July 16th news report, dated July 8th, the correspondent for Chefoo states that the weather of the past few days had been "very hot," making sea bathing a popular pastime.
[53] The historic term "tiffin" was used repeatedly in the North China-Herald proceedings. It generally referred to a meal taking place during the middle of the day as a light repast. There is some ambiguity as to what exact time "tiffin" was served. For the purposes of this paper and to better understand the epidemiology of the disease, it is important to pin down a sequence of events. Sources claim that the first victim, Gershom Broomhall died at 8:45 pm, within four hours of the meal. He first fell ill around 4:20 pm. Therefore, we can surmise that Sunday "tiffin" was served sometime around 4:00 pm.

"bubbles on the surface of the gravy."[54] Upon seeing this, Miss Basnett told the Chinese cooks they could dispose of the pies as they saw fit. And although some of the serving boys ate the leftovers later that night, none of the native workers became sick.

A very short time after the meal, Gershom Broomhall took ill, claiming that he had vomited at around 4:20 pm. Principal Murray gave him a reprieve from attending church services and instructed the boy to rest. Broomhall's health declined quite rapidly from there. He would be the first victim to die at 8:45 pm on Sunday night. Dr. King, a CIM physician from the neighboring sanatorium, was sent to treat the boy and initially attributed his symptoms to cholera infection. Between 3 am and 7 am the next morning, 13 additional boys also took ill and were exhibiting similar symptoms to Broomhall. Upon hearing of the "tainted" pies and learning that all of the sick boys had dined at the same tables (see Figure 1 at the end of the chapter), Dr. King quickly changed his diagnosis to ptomaine poisoning.[55] By Monday night, three more cases had arisen. Falling ill on Tuesday and Wednesday morning, respectively, Fred Momsen and Cyril Molloy brought the total number of cases to 19. With so many boys sick and dying, round the clock care was necessary. Dr. King received ample support from other doctors in Chefoo. He was joined by Doctor Yu from the sanatorium and Dr. Gulowsen from the Imperial Maritime Custom Service. Dr. King also received aid from three U.S. naval surgeons stationed in Chefoo harbor, Drs. Lumsden, Guest, and Elliot.

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[54] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," 213.

[55] The term "ptomaine poisoning" was often mistakenly misapplied to cases of food poisoning. Ptomaine is, in fact, a class of toxic bases that are formed during metabolic interactions between bacteria and proteins. They do not actually present any danger to humans because they are easily neutralized by our digestive systems. It is important to understand what doctors of the time meant when using the term ptomaine poisoning. For the purposes of this paper, it will be used interchangeably with food poisoning.

Although the boys' illnesses were not entirely uniform, their symptoms seemed to differ only in severity. Each of the boys appeared to suffer from a disease of the digestive tract. Dr. King described his patient's symptoms as being fairly similar, each boy displaying signs of "intense thirst, vomiting, profuse diarrhoea—at the early stages very putrid stools—marked collapse, coldness and blueness of the extremities, sunken features, anxious expression, and dilated pupils."[56] While all of the attending doctors commented that the boys' symptoms closely resembled cholera, they also noted that the symptoms could likewise be attributed to an extreme form of food poisoning. Dr. King began treatment immediately, but took precautions in case the disease turned out to be cholera.[57] Although none of the doctors went into great detail about their course of treatment, we do find a few descriptive accounts. Drs. Yu and King apparently treated the boys by giving them a series of hot baths, and this was the principle treatment given to Gershom Broomhall.[58] Whenever a boy complained of cramps, he was immediately massaged by trained nurses. Beyond these insights, we do not know if the boys were treated primarily for food poisoning or cholera.

Immediately after Gershom Broomhall's surprisingly swift death, his room was hermetically sealed and his belongings were slated to be burned. With the ever-increasing slew of new illnesses, part of the school was transformed into an impromptu medical wing. As more boys became ill early Monday morning, the attending doctors took great pains to separate the sick from the healthy. This was done as much for ease of treatment as it was for preventing the spread of contagion. In Table 1, we see the rapid progress of

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[56] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 264.
[57] "The Chefoo Calamity," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 30, 1902, 225.
[58] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 264.

the disease. Ellsworth Fitch died on Monday morning, and three more boys would follow in the next 24 hours. When the sixth victim, Hugh Gray-Owen, died, his body was removed to an upstairs room in anticipation of an official autopsy. Five more boys died on Tuesday afternoon, all within three hours of one another. When no new cases arose after Tuesday morning, attending physicians assumed that the worst of the epidemic had passed. Thus, it came as a great surprise when Cyril Molloy took ill on Wednesday morning. As late as Tuesday afternoon, he had been sea bathing at the coast and eating hearty meals. He would become the 13th and final victim on Wednesday night.

The Chefoo Calamity caused an immediate uproar in China's expat community and was the chief topic of discussion for weeks afterward. In the early days of the Calamity, Shanghai had been inundated with blow-by-blow accounts of the disease's spread and young victims. For a community that had just experienced the ravages of the Boxer Rebellion, it must have seemed like yet another attack on foreign childlife in China. School staff did their best to contact a boy's family when he took ill, but it was often impossible to reach far-flung merchant and missionary parents in time for final visits. Because of the rumors of cholera, most of the boys were buried within hours of their deaths. *The North China Herald*'s Chefoo correspondent wrote that "there were sad scenes at the graveside: sisters in the neighbouring school having lost brothers, and parents, who have arrived, viewing the last of, in many cases, their only sons."[59] A week after the fatal meal, the school held a solemn memorial service that was well-attended by late-arriving parents, the local expat community, and the American and British Consuls.[60]

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[59] "The School Fatality," 115.
[60] "A Memorial Service," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 30, 1902, 211.

The School Calamity was far from over, however. A thorough inquiry into the deaths would have to be performed before the victims could truly be put to rest. The school faced the daunting task of upholding its reputation as one of the premier Western boarding schools in China. Its nearly spotless health record had been irrevocably tarnished. To lose a quarter of its male boarders in only three days was not only tragic but perplexing. What could have gone so terribly wrong? Wild rumors quickly began circulating to account for the excessive number of deaths. Early news articles pointed out serious flaws in the school's kitchen management, hygienic standards, and medical supervision. Added to this was the ambiguity of the disease itself. Initial telegrams indicated that Gershom Broomhall died of cholera, while later ones mentioned bad pies and ptomaine poisoning. This uncertainty of diagnosis would continue to trouble investigators throughout the entire official inquiry. One thing, however, was clear to China's foreign community at large: Chefoo School was not the safe, sheltered "island of white" that it had so long purported to be.[61] Changes needed to be made and quickly.

Official Inquisition

The call for an official investigation came from within the CIM high command. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering that six of the dead boys were children of CIM missionaries. The ever-worsening situation at the school had caused Chefoo School authorities to call for an official inquisition into the deaths on Tuesday, July 8th. Their intention was to find the source of the contagion, determine whether any wrongdoings at the school had been contributing factors, and prevent future calamities. H.B.M. Consul-General Herbert Brady chose a jury of respected Chefoo businessmen to assist him in his

[61] Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939.*

investigation. For the purposes of the investigation and trial, Brady served as coroner. After the jury was sworn and charged to determine "when, where, how and by what means the said Hugh Gray-Owen came to his death," they were taken to perform a cursory examination of the boy's body.[62] Once that was completed, the jury requested that an autopsy be performed. Gray-Owen's internal organs were sent to the Shanghai Municipal Health Department Laboratory for testing, and the inquest was adjourned until the results could be published on July 19th.

Because the boys died as the result of foodborne illnesses, the jury directed a huge amount of scrutiny toward the school's kitchen management. During the investigation, they took pains to discover how the chicken pies had become diseased. The icebox was the subject of several inquiries into hygiene. The immediate reaction was to view the ice, which had been obtained from native sellers, as a possible source of contagion. At the time, ice peddled from Chinese vendors was often harvested from rice paddies where farmers tended to use night soil as a fertilizer.[63] Upon seeing the design of the icebox, however, the coroner quickly ruled out ice as a site of contamination. The school's icebox had an upper and lower compartment with the capacity to hold 50 pounds of ice.[64] Its design required kitchen staff to place ice into a watertight metal tube that ran the length of both compartments. As the ice melted, it would sink lower into the tube, leaving food in the upper compartment unrefrigerated. On the date in question, two of the six pies had been consigned to the upper compartment, and several witnesses shared the opinion that those two pies must have gone bad between Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon.

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[62] "In His Britanic Majesty's Court at Chefoo," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 30, 1902, 237.
[63] "Pure Ice," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, March 26, 1902, 530.
[64] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 263.

Principal Murray, who sat at the center table, noted that even his pie, which presumably came from the lower compartment, appeared to be tainted by the weather. At its most efficient, the icebox was clearly unable to preserve food for longer than a few hours in hot weather.

The investigation into the icebox led the coroner to question the prudence of refrigerating meat overnight in hot summer months, calling it "an extremely dangerous practice."[65] Food and waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, and hepatitis had caused Westerners living in Asia to adopt strict guidelines about food preparation. These food preparation and storage rituals helped expats feel safer and more in control of their own "fragile" constitutions. While ice and cold storage devices were an important colonial necessity, they were not intended for long-term storage. The reckless habit of storing meat overnight was viewed as a serious hygienic transgression that needlessly put school pupils at risk for foodborne illnesses. In his closing statement, the coroner argued that eating day old refrigerated meat was foolishly negligent of the children's welfare and asked the jury to give a firm recommendation to the school about proper icebox use.[66] In their verdict, the jury found the icebox to be unsuitable for such a large school and encouraged kitchen staff to restock the ice more frequently during summer months. They also condemned the school's tradition of refrigerating Sunday's meal overnight.

A large portion of the official inquiry also centered on the boys' diet. Principal Murray explained that diet was entirely regulated by the school matron with no outside instruction. His rationale was that, so long as no complaints arose, the boys' diet need not

[65] Ibid., 266.
[66] Ibid.

concern the school administration. Jury members found this laissez-faire approach to nutrition especially alarming. Colonial interactions with ideas on germs, disease acquisition, and hygiene had made Westerners in China especially vigilant about policing their own diets. In order to prevent food poisoning and bacterial infections, savvy foreigners prohibited unboiled, unpeeled vegetables, unstewed fruits, and day old meats from their tables.[67] For Sunday tiffin, however, the boys' school provided a meal of cold chicken pie, potatoes, rice, lettuce, cucumber salad, and tarts made of black currants and mulberries for dessert.[68] When the school matron took the stand, she pled ignorance of colonial hygienic dietary guidelines. Although she had lived in China since 1890, she insisted that she saw nothing wrong with serving raw vegetables at mealtimes. The matron argued that the cucumbers came from the school's own garden and that Dr. King had not objected.[69] When the coroner criticized the practice of eating day-old food in hot weather, Miss Basnett replied saying that

> I do not consider it unwise to give the boys food cooked the day before. I eat it myself, it is a rule, and I have no reason to believe there has previously been sickness caused by the practice. I have never heard doctors say it is a bad custom. I do not know that doctors condemn such in hot weather.[70]

It seems unbelievable that a long-term resident of China could be so entirely unaware of colonial hygienic conventions. Perhaps, when it became clear that the full weight of blame was being directed at the school's kitchen department, Miss Basnett found it safer to claim ignorance than to admit culpability. In any case, the coroner displayed skepticism toward the woman's testimony, repeatedly stating that such basic hygienic information was common knowledge. That such an unapologetically ignorant woman had

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[67] Ibid., 263.
[68] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," 214.
[69] King would later refute this.
[70] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 263.

been given sole charge of the boys' diet was viewed as unconscionably reckless. Basnett's dismissive attitude toward dietary hygiene throughout the trial greatly alarmed observers and only served to attract more attention to kitchen mismanagement.

The trial's intense scrutiny of nearly every food item on the menu gives us a deeper insight into the anxieties over food contamination that plagued China's foreign community around the turn of the century. During the trial, the coroner went so far as to call the kitchen the "most important department of the whole school.[71] Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, expats in Asia felt compelled to adopt strict diets in order to prevent contamination. Many Westerners even viewed strict diets as a way to boost immunity against infection. Because rich foods like meat were especially affordable in China for foreigners, it became widely believed that the richer the faire, the greater the likelihood of infection or ill health. As a result, Westerners, especially Christian missionaries, endeavored to simplify their diets by choosing to abstain from watery vegetables, alcohol, exotic dishes, raw foods, and excessive meat consumption.[72] It is quite significant that a strict mission like the CIM would devote so little attention to the dietary plans of its boarding schools. The kitchen management's overreliance on an icebox had led to liberalization in summer eating habits. The boys were allowed to eat day old meat, ice cream, and uncooked fruits and vegetables even though such food items were seen as dangerous and frivolous to other Christians in the country. Because of her

[71] Ibid.
[72] Jen-Li Shang, "Eating Well in China," in *Health and Hygiene in Chinese East Asia: Policies and Publics in the Long Twentieth Century*, ed. Qizi Liang and Charlotte Furth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 112-14.

display of dietary neglect, Miss Basnett became something of a scapegoat for the School Calamity.[73]

In their official closing remarks, the jury found great fault with the school's kitchen department. Their first critique laid partial blame for the deaths at the feet of Miss Basnett and her native assistants. They stated that

> …we, the said Jurors, taking into consideration the great responsibility pertaining to the charge of so many young boys, are of opinion that the direction of the house keeping department leaves much to be desired, and that a thorough supervision of the kitchen, its utensils and surroundings was lacking—too much, in our judgment, having been left to the care of the native Chinese servants.[74]

The jury suggested that the deaths may not have occurred if Miss Basnett had exercised stricter supervision over native kitchen workers. This seems strange as, earlier in the trial, the investigation paid scant attention to native workers. Their testimonies largely served to provide a timeline of events and there was little to suggest that they had been lax in performing their duties. The jury's critique points to a larger belief within China's foreign community: that the dangers of living in close proximity to Chinese workers could only be mediated through constant supervision and strictly enforced boundaries. There was a widespread belief that native workers could not be trusted to work autonomously—especially if their work pertained to hygiene. When asked specific questions about food preparation, storage, or hygiene, Miss Basnett had claimed complete ignorance. She had not known if the chicken had been bought alive, she could not remember the last time she inspected the icebox or saucepans, and she did not actually see the pies until they were

[73] It appears that, despite her deficiencies, Miss Basnett did not lose her job after the School Calamity. She did not work at the school much longer, however, as she ended up dying of scarlet fever less than nine months after the trial.
[74] "In His Britanic Majesty's Court at Chefoo," 238.

served at Sunday tiffin. The jury was dumbfounded that the matron had placed so much trust upon the "dubious" hygienic sensibilities of native workers.

The second major criticism from the jury addressed what it saw as insufficient medical consultation in the school. In his closing remarks, the coroner took particular issue with the lack of medical supervision exercised over dietary decisions at Chefoo School, arguing that the "accident must be attributed to the fact that the medical attendant of the school was not consulted as to the diet which should be provided for the boys."[75] In their verdict, the jury called for stricter medical supervision, advising school administrators to consult with physicians on a regular basis in order to prevent future accidents and enforce modern, scientifically supported dietary standards.[76] The Chefoo School Calamity is an informative case because it occurred at a time when ideas about public and private health were beginning to converge. Chefoo School was very much a product of its time. In England, fears of population degeneracy following the Second Boer War had led the government to take a stronger interest in childrearing and domestic hygiene.[77] It is telling that by 1904—only two years after the events of this case study—the British state was beginning to call for regular medical inspections of school children.[78] In this case study, we are able to see the mental tug-of-war that was occurring between the public and domestic spheres over health. Before 1902, the school's administration had very little interest in policing a scientific diet. Principal Murray and his superiors hearkened back to a time when the kitchen was the undisputable sphere of

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[75] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 266.
[76] "In His Britanic Majesty's Court at Chefoo," 238.
[77] For more about the rise of deterioration rhetoric following the Boer War, see Richard Soloway, "Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 1 (1982).
[78] Inter-Department Committee on Deterioration Great Britain, William Fitz Roy Almeric *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1904). 91.

women. Aside from Miss Basnett, the only other person at the school with even minute control over diet was Mrs. Murray, the principal's wife. It would have been seen as shockingly presumptuous for a man—even a medical man—to give instructions about kitchen management and diet. It was not until the late 19th century that public health measures began to actively interfere in the domestic sphere through the ascension of medical advisory boards.

An Epidemiological Controversy

Over the course of the investigation, it was a matter of huge contention whether the disease that killed the boys should be identified as cholera or food poisoning. The physicians who testified at the trial held huge biases that, at first glance, seem incomprehensibly negligent. Even in the face of strong evidence for cholera, all of the doctors adhered to a diagnosis of food poisoning. In the trial, we see that making a definitive diagnosis and preventing the spread of epidemic disease were not necessarily a colonial doctor's first priority. The politics of reputation were just as influential to a doctor's decision-making as the Hippocratic Oath. This section will attempt to unravel the medical biases surrounding the Chefoo School Calamity by focusing on key subjects raised during the inquisition.

In June of 1902, there had been rumors of a cholera epidemic sweeping Chefoo's native population as well as the Chinese coast at large. Chefoo's foreign residents were told which hygienic precautions to take, and the local hotel was periodically inspected for disease.[79] Dr. Gulowsen, the port physician, performed several microscopic tests and

[79] Otto Gulowsen, "Dr. Otto Gulowsen's Report on the Health of Chefoo," in *Medical Reports for the Half-year ended 30th September 1902* (Shanghai: Imperial Maritime Customs Statistical Department), 33.

physical examinations on afflicted members of the native population, eventually ruling out cholera and making a diagnosis of gastro-enteritis.[80] In spite of this, rumors of cholera still prevailed. At the time of the School Calamity, most Western households in Chefoo were still on high alert over the presumed cholera epidemic.

The circumstances of the Calamity did nothing to abate public fears of cholera. Rather, the ambiguity of contradictory reports coming out of Chefoo only served to magnify them. After initially diagnosing cholera in the case of Gershom Broomhall, Dr. King quickly changed his verdict to food poisoning. He adhered quite doggedly to his diagnosis throughout the entire investigation, arguing a well-reasoned case for food poisoning. He said that the boys' earlier stool samples were inconsistent with the rice water stools that were usually found in cholera.[81] [82] Subsequent physician testimonies agreed with the diagnosis that it was an open-shut case of food poisoning by relying mainly on circumstantial evidence. Their bias caused them to dismiss the mountain of evidence pointing toward cholera. For example, Dr. Elliot stated that he believed the deaths were an obvious case of food poisoning because only a certain subset of boys (i.e., the boys sitting at tables A and B during Sunday tiffin) fell ill.[83] Likewise, Dr. Gulowsen testified that "if I had not heard of the pies, which more or less localised the outbreak, I should have certainly said cholera. I have never seen anything approaching it so closely."[84] Gulowsen's knowledge of the pies led him to dismiss the boys' choleric symptoms. As a doctor for the Imperial Maritimes Customs, he had squashed rumors of

[80] Ibid., 32.
[81] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 264.
[82] Dr. Guest attested that the boys' symptoms were not in line with cholera, arguing that the color and composition of vomit and stool samples were inconsistent with the disease. Interestingly enough, he also pointed to the disease's sudden onset as proof that it could not be cholera. Before 1902, after all, several studies had proven that cholera symptoms could appear within as little as [8] hours.
[83] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," 212.
[84] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 265.

cholera outbreaks in the past, and in the absence of irrefutable scientific proof of the disease, such as a positive bacteriological culture or microscopic exam, Gulowsen readily adhered to the popular verdict of food poisoning.

The most compelling evidence against cholera was the results of a lab test performed by Drs. Yu and Guest. After examining stool samples from two different boys under a microscope, the doctors found no evidence of comma bacillus, the bacterium thought to cause cholera.[85] This final piece of evidence gave the doctors what they felt to be a suitable amount of justification to completely rule out cholera. Indeed, it would have sealed the case then and there but for two very troubling facts. First, both stool samples were taken from boys who eventually recovered.[86] Second, microscopic tests at the time for cholera were often fallacious and unreliable. Cholera experts, then and now, agree that microscopic analysis should only be used as a preliminary screening technique.[87] Because the attending doctors failed to perform a bacteriological culture test, the conclusions of the first microscopic examinations should have been viewed with a critical eye.[88]

On July 12th, technicians at the Shanghai Municipal Health Department began a thorough examination of Hugh Gray-Owen's organs. In the naked eye report, the health officers recorded that abnormal stress had been placed on the heart, kidneys, and small intestine due to congestion and excessive secretion. All of this was considered to be consistent with cholera. Next, the health officers performed a microscopic test. Like their

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[85] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," 212-13.
[86] The stools examined belonged to Cyril Newcomb and Frank Perry, both of whom recovered and were back to their studies by July 18th.
[87] National Center for Infectious Diseases and Pan American Health Organization, *Laboratory Methods for the Diagnosis of Vibrio cholerae* (Atlanta, GA: CDC/NCID, 1994).
[88] "Inquest," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, August 4, 1905, 277.

Chefoo counterparts, they were also unable to find traces of cholera bacteria. After postulating that the negative results may have been caused by sample decomposition, the doctors took it upon themselves to perform a bacteriological examination. They quickly identified the presence of choleric bacteria in Gray-Owen's bowel and testified that they were "of the opinion that death was produced by cholera."[89]

Even after hearing the official lab results, however, Dr. King still stood by his diagnosis of food poisoning. He went so far as to write a letter to the editor on the day that the official report was published, questioning the validity of the results from several different angles. Citing Manson's *Treatise on Tropical Disease,* King contended that the comma bacillus found in Gray-Owen's sample had not been conclusively proven to cause cholera. Going a step further, he wrote that it had even been found in the stools of healthy individuals. Finally, King argued that the shape of the bacillus could be easily confused with other bacilli. He seemed impossibly confident in his verdict of food poisoning, stating repeatedly that ptomaine poisoning was "certain" and was based on "evidence so conclusive as to approach actual proof."[90] King's actions would sow many seeds of doubt amongst the expat community and take away the feeling of closure that the trial was meant to convey.

On July 22nd and in spite of King's avowals, the Chefoo Jurymen returned a verdict after two hours of deliberation concluding that Hugh Gray-Owen died from cholera.[91] Although they had no definitive proof as to how the disease entered the school,

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[89] "In His Britanic Majesty's Court at Chefoo," 238.
[90] "The Chefoo Calamity," 225.
[91] The jury also commented that they were "strongly of opinion that the deaths of the other twelve boys of the school who died between the 6th and 10th of July were also due to a similar cause." For a full account of their verdict, see "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 266.

they supposed that the source of contamination had been the tainted chicken pies.[92] The official verdict only served to further divide opinions among the foreign community. Readers did not know whom to believe, the Chefoo doctors or the medical officers in Shanghai. And with Dr. King doing everything in his power to sow seeds of doubt about the results of the bacteriological reports, the jury's verdict became a matter of opinion.

The great reluctance of Chefoo's doctors to diagnose cholera points to a greater hygienic reality in treaty port China. The two most outspoken supporters of ptomaine poisoning, Drs. Gulowsen and King, had the most to lose from a diagnosis of cholera. Gulowsen, as a doctor for the Imperial Maritime Customs, knew that a well-publicized cholera outbreak would severely cripple trade entering and exiting the port. Historically, areas infested by the disease were subject to huge economic losses because of quarantines and trade embargos. Cholera was also accompanied by widespread social panic, which often caused businesses to temporarily close shop. Special quarantine measures in treaty ports usually required doctors to closely inspect incoming vessels carrying sick passengers, which slowed commerce to a crawl and greatly increased the work load of Imperial Customs employees.[93] In *Cholera: The Biography*, Christopher Hamlin expounds further on the medical bias against cholera diagnoses. He writes that

> to admit the existence of cholera in a place was to create fear, which predisposed to the disease itself. Cholera denial is a common theme of cholera historians, though 'cholera reluctance' would be fairer. Given the error costs, those who would proclaim an epidemic were expected to meet a high burden of proof.[94]

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[92] Ibid.

[93] For a discussion of quarantine regulations in Chefoo around the time of the School Calamity, see Great Britain Local Government Board Robert Bruce Low, *Reports and Papers on Bubonic Plague* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1902). For quarantine regulations in another Chinese port city, see Imperial Maritime Customs Health Reports, "China: Quarantine Regulations for the Port of Newchwang," *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* 21, no. 45 (1906); Great Britain Local Government Board Robert Bruce Low, *Reports and Papers on Bubonic Plague* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1902).

[94] Christopher Hamlin, *Cholera: The Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

For these reasons and more, many doctors chose to underreport their cases or attribute them to less deadly, less stigmatized diseases like ptomaine poisoning or gastro-enteritis. The School Calamity's well-publicized verdict of cholera gave Dr. Gulowsen little choice but to acknowledge the disease's presence in Chefoo. In his official health report for the year, however, he did his best to minimize the damage by tacking the verdict of cholera onto longwinded descriptions of ptomaine poisoning.[95]

Dr. King had a few additional disincentives for reporting a cholera epidemic. First, a diagnosis of cholera would have damaged the reputation of the Sanatorium. Chefoo's temperate coastal climate had made it an attractive destination for ailing foreigners, and if it became widely believed that cholera had broken out in the Sanatorium's back yard, the hospital's healthful reputation would have been greatly besmirched. A contradictory verdict from Shanghai would have also greatly discredited Chefoo doctors. Second, a diagnosis of cholera would have made it much more difficult to salvage Chefoo School's reputation as a safe, healthy refuge from the dangers of China. From its foundation, the school had expended a great deal of efforts to segregate children from unwanted Chinese influences. And, generally speaking, Chefoo students had next to no contact with native staff members or Chefoo's Chinese population. That cholera was able to sneak into the building and infect 19 pupils would suggest that the school's boundaries were not as airtight as previously assumed. A diagnosis of food poisoning was the lesser of two evils. Food poisoning was seen as a one-time occurrence—an accident that could be easily prevented in the future. Cholera, on the other hand, was an infection inextricably tied to place. In the eyes of Western expats, it left a deeper, more indelible stain on a location.

[95] Gulowsen, "Dr. Otto Gulowsen's Report on the Health of Chefoo," 33.

Finally, a definite diagnosis of cholera would have endangered the reputation of the China Inland Mission at large. As a coda to the trial transcript, Chefoo's newspaper correspondent actually accused the CIM of using cholera denial to protect its own reputation. Although leaders of the CIM had originally been the ones to call for an inquisition, they probably did not anticipate the direction the trial would eventually take. The jury found several faults with the school's management, and Miss Basnett's poor testimony served to alienate readers. Cholera, with its panic-inducing reputation, would have further degraded the name of the mission. Dr. King's passionate denial of cholera actually worked in the mission's favor by lessening the blow of the final verdict. He introduced reasonable doubt into the minds of the expat community. In the end, the muddled and ambiguous results of the inquisition gave the CIM an opportunity to salvage Chefoo's reputation as a healthful curative retreat.

Short-term and Long-term Impacts

The Calamity changed the way that China's foreign community viewed Chefoo School. Its reputation was severely shaken by hints of cholera and hygienic incompetence. The school Calamity created several short-term impacts on Chefoo School and its environs. First, it inspired the school to quickly resolve the problems unearthed by the inquisition. Second, it gave the CIM a negative reputation for strict, dogmatic fanaticism. Some non-CIM members even began protesting against the mission's increasing hegemony in the region. Third, the Calamity reawakened anxieties from the Boxer Rebellion by making members of Chefoo's foreign community hyper-aware of the physical dangers that lurked next door or down the street. It made them even more

resolute to strengthen foreigner networks and enforce stricter segregationist policies. Observers demonized the Chinese environment and called for drastic improvements in sanitation and public health works.

Long-term impacts are somewhat harder to track, but one thing is clear: the Calamity was a defining moment in the school's history. New and improved isolationist policies would help transform Chefoo School from a medium security boarding school into a veritable Western fortress. The Calamity and trial attracted a great deal of scrutiny that would eventually serve as a transformative influence over school policy. It became a stricter, more physically segregated institution as a result of the health crisis. The school also became much more intimately tied to the medical establishment in Chefoo by developing a distinct chain of hygienic authority.

At the time of the official inquisition, Chefoo community members voiced their displeasure at what they saw to be a conflict of interest between religious dogma and physical health. As a proselytizing organization, the CIM had a well-known reputation of making big concessions to the Chinese in order to gain converts.[96] The trial had publicized that, by 1902, it was already an established tradition for Chefoo School pupils to eat day-old meals on Sundays so that the native kitchen staff could attend weekly church services. Several critics wrote in to *The North China Herald*, blaming the school's adherence to outdated rules about Sabbath day observance for the Calamity. Striking against the school's perceived religious fanaticism, one writer lamented that "the lives of all those dear boys were unintentionally sacrificed to an Old Testament Jewish notion of

[96] More than any other mission, the CIM adopted a strategy of cultural learning and adaptation in order to make missionaries more approachable to potential Chinese converts. Most CIM missionaries in the field dressed in traditional Chinese garb, ate Chinese food, and learned to speak Chinese dialects. For more on this subject, see Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905*.

Sabbath observance…"[97] This religious critique is quite ironic because, up until this point, the administration's emphasis on humble service, physical purity, and a strict observance of Christian dogma had been just as much of a selling point as the school's hygienic environment. School administrators and parents alike believed that a good Christian upbringing would protect children as much as a brisk climate or sterile environment. Both were important considerations when it came to raising upright young men and women in China, but it is clear that, when worse came to worse, most foreigners in the country were prepared to eschew religious dogma in favor of protecting the physical wellbeing of their children.

After the trial concluded, observers began to question the security of Chefoo City's own hygienic policies. How could Chefoo School, with its small population, isolationist rules, and strict moral policies have been so drastically compromised? To answer that question, Chefoo's foreign community only had to look at the filth that seemed to permeate the city. For some, it was much easier to blame the Calamity on the corrupting influence of China's environment than to further denigrate Chefoo School's shortsighted hygienic policies. Many parents and teachers simply chose to deflect blame toward Chefoo's hygienic defects. Writing from a nearby school in Weihaiwei three months after the deaths, one contributor argued that the dirty, unhygienic conditions of the city were the true culprit in the entire debacle, not short-sighted school policies. He wrote that

> While there may be two opinions as to the justice of the strictures passed by the jury on the school management, while doctors may differ as to the actual cause of death, there can be little doubt that the disgusting condition of the native city exercises a prejudicial effect on the health of all living in its neighbourhood,

[97] "The Chefoo School and Sabbatarianism," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, August 13, 1902, 327.

> whose food supplies are possibly obtained in part from tainted sources and under insanitary conditions. (In all probability the management of the culinary department in the school is quite as satisfactory as it is in the British Consul's own household.)
>
> 'Indescribably filthy' is the description of the native city recently given the writer by one who can speak with some authority. Its wretched tenements, occupied by a large and dense population, are almost in juxtaposition to houses inhabited by foreigners. Its streets are little better than open drains and sewers emitting the most pestiferous odours.[98]

The correspondent went on to contend that treaty ports were at a greater risk of epidemics because of their large coolie populations. He argued that, although a large concentration of itinerant day-laborers had considerably worsened the hygienic standards of Chefoo, coolies were a necessary evil for maintaining a bustling center of commerce. Rather than supporting a campaign to enforce better hygiene among laborers, the correspondent called for stricter segregationist measures through the establishment of a foreign concession in Chefoo. His rationale was that Western commerce could only flourish in Chefoo with the assistance of a large coolie population and Westerners themselves could only flourish if they were allowed to keep a safe distance. A foreign concession would, presumably, keep Westerners and coolies separated "as widely as possible" and prevent the spread of Asian epidemic diseases into expat populations.[99] In the end, Chefoo never established an official foreign concession.

The Chefoo School Calamity galvanized school administrators to tighten its moral and physical boundaries, and it became more cautious and proactive when dealing with health threats in the future. Eight years after the deaths, Chefoo city once again faced a large-scale health crisis when there was an outbreak of plague during the winter of 1910/1911. Administrators took every precaution to keep the disease from infecting the

[98] "Weihaiwei: From Our Own Correspondent," 1220.
[99] Ibid.

students by collaborating with nonmission health authorities. In order to stay well-informed about the epidemic's impact on the city, they consulted with the Presbyterian Mission doctor and Dr. Gulowsen, the port doctor who helped treat the boys in 1902. When the winter holidays came to a close, it was deemed unsafe to allow the children to return to the school. Instead, administrators set up a temporary boarding school at the CIM compound in Shanghai. This incident contrasts greatly with the school's inept handling of the 1902 Calamity and shows how vigilant and proactive school administrators became in reaction to intense public scrutiny.[100] The school went to great lengths to create emergency plans to prevent contamination from reaching its pupils. This sort of forward thinking became a hallmark of Chefoo School in years to come.

In the long run, Chefoo School maintained its reputation for healthfulness. The Calamity was caused by the school's rapid expansion nearly as much as anything else. The deaths occurred 21 years into the school's history, at a time when enrollment had begun to skyrocket. A few years before the Calamity took place, the mission had invested a huge amount of money to expand both the boys' and girls' schools. By 1902, the CIM had also begun converting a nearby hotel to house primary school students. As a result, the school nearly doubled its enrollment capacity in only a few short years. Perhaps it had such a difficult time modernizing because of this population boom. Simply put, it was suffering from growing pains. While school enrollment continued to grow, the administration did not. The idea of creating meal plans simply had not occurred to over-worked school officials. The Calamity acted as an impetus for change. Although it damaged the school's reputation in the short term, it also gave it an opportunity to find

[100] "The Chefoo Schools," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, January 27, 1911, 223.

areas for improvement. The school's reputation was also somewhat protected by its health record prior to the Calamity. Between 1881 and 1902, it had only lost one child to disease.[101] Such a stellar health record could not be so easily forgotten. While the epidemic left a deep impact on Westerners in China, it did not inhibit future enrollment. Rather, the Calamity led to a tightening of the invisible hygienic borders that surrounded Chefoo School. It quickly adopted the court's health and hygiene recommendations, and it became even stricter when enforcing isolationist policies.[102]

Conclusion

Throughout the trial, several contributors expressed the belief that strict supervision of children was of supreme importance. In regards to instilling children with Western morals and identities, there appeared to be no problem whatsoever at Chefoo School. Staff members, however, had grievously neglected the boys' physical safety by failing to strictly manage and enforce hygienic and dietary regimens within the school. As state-sponsored hygiene projects began their ascendancy, the trend within isolationist theory was toward increased supervision, increased segregation, and increased security. This was especially true for boarding schools. Members of China's foreign community held school hygiene to higher standards than their own households.

Over the years, the Calamity was largely glossed over by school authorities, and the precise details of the case were largely forgotten. CIM-published histories of the school make short comments about ptomaine poisoning or simply omit the sad event altogether. This is unsurprising considering the amount of bad press that the trial brought

[101] "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition (concluded)," 264.
[102] Ibid., 265.

the school. Although the Calamity itself was all but forgotten, its legacy lived on in the school's later reputation for hygienic excellence. It was the Chefoo Calamity that helped the school become a near-perfect physical manifestation of colonial ideals.

Although this case study spends much time discussing the evolution and optimization of colonial isolationism, it also obliquely alludes to certain inherent flaws in the system. The Calamity and its accompanying trial proved that true and complete segregation were aspirations rather than fait accompli. The CIM may have enforced strict no-contact rules between native staff and Chefoo pupils, but the fact remains that Chinese servants held a surprising amount of power over Westerners as food handlers and maids. Stricter supervision in the kitchen did not nullify their presence in the school. And if the scapegoating of a lower-class white woman and her native staff is any indication, this incomplete segregation was a source of much anxiety for Westerners. It is also worthwhile to note the inconsistency of Dr. Yu's presence in this story. For school administrators to allow a Chinese doctor to treat children suggests that full segregation was especially infeasible during times of crisis or great practical need. In these situations, foreigners would allow highly vetted members of the Chinese community to enter their bubbles of isolation. As an American-educated doctor with possible ties to the Christian community, Dr. Yu met very demanding criteria of suitability.[103] Had the situation not been so dire and labor-intensive, however, Dr. Yu's services probably would not have been used.

The next chapter will turn to a discussion of isolationism in practice by investigating colonial childrearing techniques within the domestic sphere. By doing so,

[103] Dr. Robert Yu studied medicine at Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio and graduated with an American medical degree. His testimony indicates that he was a fluent English speaker with a Western understanding of germ theory.

we will find many more examples of partial isolationism and explore the unintended transformative impacts that it often had upon the identities of children.

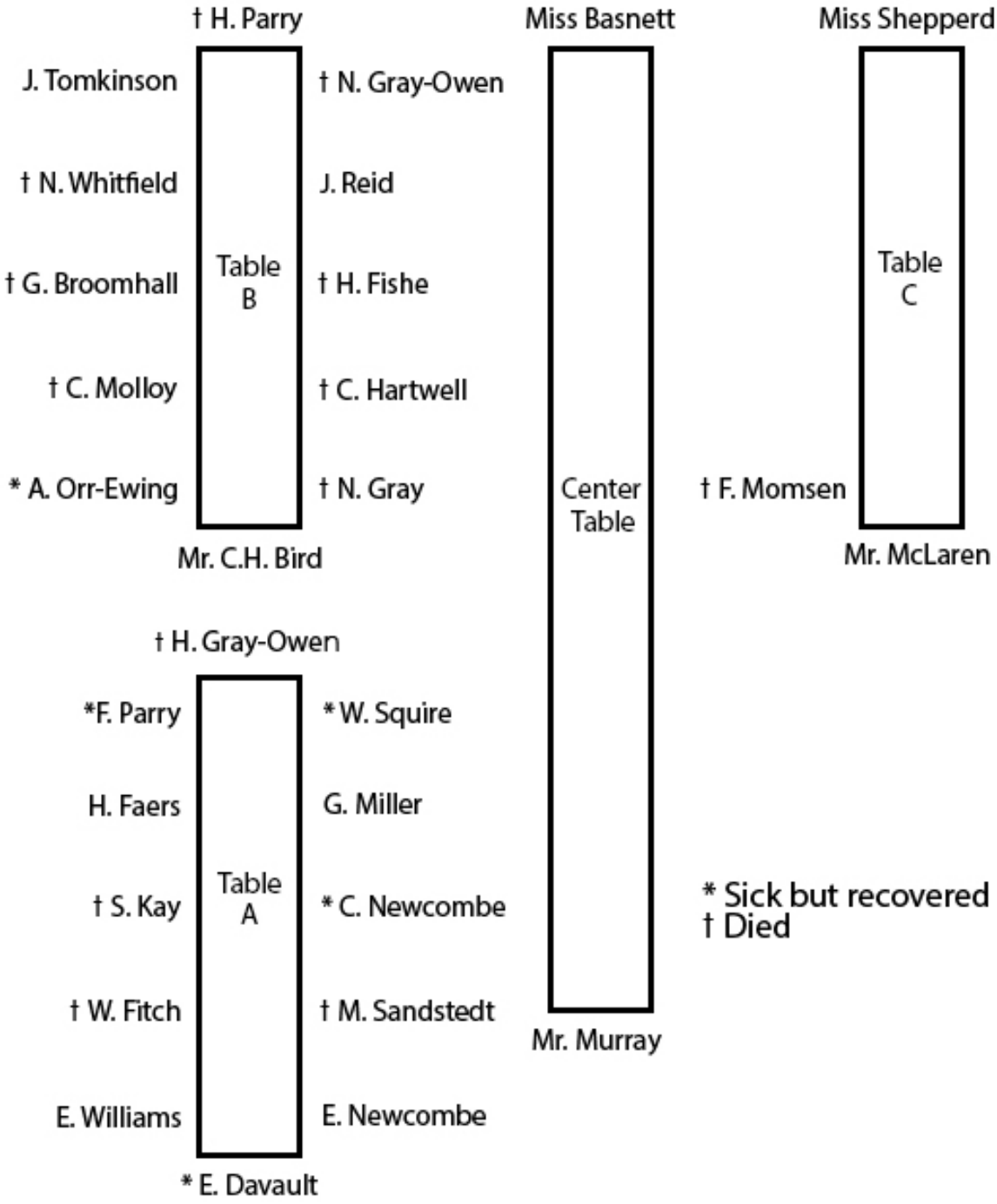

Figure 1. A seating chart for the fatal meal[104]

[104] This seating chart was adapted from a line drawing first published in *The North China Herald*. For the original, see "The Chefoo School Calamity: Official Inquisition," 213.

Table 1. A chart detailing death order, time of death, and fathers' professions[105]

Death Order	Time of Death	Name	Age	Father's Profession
1	Sun, 2045	Gershom Broomhall	11	CIM Missionary
2	Mon, morning	Ellsworth R. Fitch	10	American Presbyterian Mission
3	Mon, 1545	Marit Sanstedt	12	Sea Captain
4		Nicholas Gray	13	A Russian Merchant in Japan
5		Norman Gray-Owen	14	CIM Missionary
6	Tues, 1200	Hugh Gray-Owen	12	CIM Missionary
7		Stewart Kay	10	CIM Missionary
8		Howard Fishe	11	CIM Missionary
9		Herbert Parry	16	CIM Missionary
10		Claude Hartwell	10	American Baptist Mission
11		Norman Whitfield	10	Merchant
12	Tues, 1415	Fred Momsen	11	Sea Captain
13	Wed, 2010	Cyril Molloy	10	Chinese Imperial Customs

[105] For an ordered list of fatalities, see "Terrible Fatality at Chefoo," *The North China-Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, July 9, 1902, 52. For a list of father's professions, see China Inland Mission, "The Honored Dead," *China's Millions* (1903): 97. Times of death were pulled from several different news articles appearing in the July and August weekly publications of *The North China Herald*.

CHAPTER 3

COLONIAL DOMESTICITY AND THE PRACTICAL CHILDHOOD

While the previous two chapters have focused on colonial isolationism and its uses within theory-based, highly institutionalized schooling, this chapter will discuss how isolationism operated in practice by focusing on the domestic sphere. When children were present in the home, parents found it more difficult to mimic the strict isolationist practices of boarding schools and were forced to accept certain Chinese influences into their children's lives. Although parents did their best to guard against physical, moral, and identity corruption, the first two concerns took greater priority. Instilling children with strong national identities was a difficult task beyond areas of high-expat concentration, and, as a result, many parents felt that lessons in identity could wait until boarding school. The goals of isolationist theory sought to negate the effects of growing up in China and produce children who were indistinguishable from their peers in the metropole. This chapter argues that, while isolationism did largely meet these goals in terms of health and morality, it actually had a transformative impact on the identities of foreign children. Practical interpretations of the theory combined with in-country boarding school education actually made it more difficult for expat children to repatriate and empathize with their countrymen in the metropole.

Rather than presenting as middle-class Americans or Britons, children instead adopted expat identities typified by Western multiculturalism, self-exoticism, bourgeois colonial status, and intimate knowledge of China. Diverse childhood experiences prevented children from developing distinct national identities, inculcated them with colonial perceptions of class, and allowed them to exercise an unprecedented level power over less multicultural parents and servants. The expat identities children acquired in the domestic sphere were magnified and solidified at schools where they studied alongside classmates with similar backgrounds. Because of this, children's ties to China's expat community often ended up trumping anything else. In order to better illustrate this argument, this chapter references eight oral histories given by missionary kids (MKs) who spent their early childhoods in rural China and attended international schools later on.[106] The first section will discuss how Western parents adapted isolationist theory to suit the realities of rural domestic life.[107] The second section will go into greater detail about how this practical application of isolationism influenced the developing identities of MKs and predisposed them to expat lifestyles.

Struggling to Enforce Isolationist Practices in China's Countryside

Although it was much more difficult to enforce rigid segregationist standards beyond the auspices of large international schools and treaty ports, parents still desired to

[106] Children of missionaries were popularly referred to as missionary kids or MKs by missionary organizations throughout the world. For the purposes of this chapter, we will use this shortened designation.
[107] Although this chapter focuses on children who spent their early childhoods in rural China, it should not be presumed that urban-dwelling children experienced a lesser degree of cultural fusion. Rather, they underwent a different kind of multicultural socialization. While they had fewer Chinese playmates, such children still spent considerable time in the company of Chinese servants. Indeed, treaty port children were socialized into China's multinational Western society much earlier than MKs in the countryside. This chapter chooses to investigate rural-dwelling expat children because they were the main attendees at Chefoo School.

keep their children as separate from China as possible. The foreign population outside of treaty ports, however, was simply too sparse and far-flung to support the kind of Western exclusivity necessary for maintaining strict cultural barriers. Because the children of rural-dwelling missionaries were often the only foreign children for days in any direction, enforcing strict East-West isolationist measures was simply impossible.[108] Parents were forced to widen the scope of isolationist dogma and adapt it to the practicalities of domestic life in rural China. Most parents were able to build make-shift social networks capable of imitating the exclusivity found in major treaty ports. As highly vetted members of Chinese society (like Dr. Yu) became temporary stand-ins for absent Western compatriots, parents became more and more adept at recognizing and excluding the most grievous threats to the welfare of their children.

Because the majority of Western families outside of treaty ports were missionary families, the decision process about who to include and exclude was often a very fraught business. Most zealous missionaries stationed in far-flung villages were there in hopes of converting the poorest, most medically deprived members of Chinese society. Missionary goals of saving potential native converts from moral and medical ignorance often conflicted with parental desires to protect children from physical corruption, however. The adaptive nature of Christian missions in China encouraged parents to mix and share freely with the native community, and most missionaries used inclusive approaches to proselytization (with members of the CIM, for example, opting to wear traditional

[108] Many missionary organizations in China were particularly concerned with penetrating the interiors and making inroads into isolated, far-flung locales. The China Inland Mission is the most notable example of this trend toward rural proselyting.

Chinese garb in the mission field).[109] Some parents believed that sequestering children from locals could potentially damage the legitimacy of the mission and lead to feelings of estrangement. Writing about road travel and interactions with locals, for example, Margaret Simkin wrote that "On the one hand I'd like to be friendly with the people, whom we supposedly are here to help; on the other, I am in terror lest they give the children some sickness."[110] Missionaries' desires to fulfill their Christian missions and protect their children from contamination were often at odds with one another. In order to assuage guilt over not succeeding at both endeavors, many parents found special ways to shield their children while still remaining politely inclusive to Chinese neighbors.

To this end, parents often chose their children's playmates very carefully, with playmate options being largely limited to two groups: highly vetted children of the local elite, and the children of servants.[111] Foreign missionaries enjoyed an elevated economic status in China and were often able to afford housing in wealthy Chinese neighborhoods. These upper-class neighbors tended to enforce higher levels of hygiene and were more likely to employ fulltime maids, groundskeepers, and nannies—a situation that satisfied Western parents' desire for constant and strict supervision. Missionary parents went to great pains to teach their children the difference between upper-class and lower-class playmates. Commenting on the subject, Eleanor Ruth Elliot explained that her mother only allowed her to play with Chinese children after she had determined their houses

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[109] Marshall Broomhall, *The Jubilee Story of the China Inland Mission: with Portraits, Illustrations & Maps* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1915). 31-33.
[110] Simkin, *Letters from Szechwan, 1923-1944*: 84.
[111] Although most Western children were allowed varying degrees of contact with children of servants and of the upper class, the most common social circles for Western children were, of course, their own siblings. Family became the most important social unit for foreign children in rural China. The nomadic nature of missionary work meant that siblings were often the only long-term playmates a child possessed. While siblings were the most ideal playmates, the children of wealthy neighbors and servants were the most viable option among the Chinese population.

were clean enough, and her father banned her from playing with the "hoi polloi" for fear that she "would catch some disease from them."[112]

Although children of wealthy families might have appeared to be the most ideal playmates for Western children in terms of hygiene, their moral practices sometimes proved problematic. Many childhood friendships were put to a swift end when wealthy young playmates began the foot binding process. Foot binding, in particular, posed a threat to Christian childrearing because it greatly influenced physical, moral, and identity health. Missionary parents saw it as the vain restructuring of the human body that would needlessly harm and handicap a woman. They were all too aware of the sexual connotations that accompanied the lotus foot. Sanctioning such obviously corrupted playmates might give foreign children perverse sexual appetites or skewed understandings of gender.

In many ways, therefore, the servant class offered foreigners with better playmate options. Desires to maintain Western hygienic standards in the rural China meant that most missionary families employed several native servants.[113] Servants and their children became integral members of the small domestic sphere and often played prominent roles in children's lives. Although they did not necessarily have high-class manners, their physical and moral habits could be more strictly managed by Western missionaries. Servants were more likely to abstain from foot binding, and friendships with their

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[112] Eleanor Ruth Elliot. Interview by Robert Schuster. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, October 4, 1981. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

[113] Elizabeth Howard Warner argued that having servants in the home was the only way to be effective missionaries and maintain Western standards of hygiene at the same time. She explained that "[I]n the old days when you didn't have any of the conveniences of modern life, living in another country, [it] would just be a full time job. You have to do your shopping every day, talk price. And your laundry is all done by hand and then hung out on the line. And all of these things take so much time." Elizabeth Howard Warner. Interview by Lois Tressler. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, November 15, 1978. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

children were easier to monitor since playtime tended to stay close to Western family compounds. Servants and their children helped MKs forge intimate connections with China, its languages, and its people. By carefully limiting the list of acceptable playmates to the children of upper-class neighbors and live-in servants, Western parents were fairly successful in shielding children from physical and moral decline. Attempts to instill MKs with strong national identities in such cross-cultural circumstances, however, were less successful and often went by the wayside. Many parents, more preoccupied with fulfilling their missionary callings and ameliorating the hygienic deficiencies of rural life, were forced to accept that living in China would inevitably affect their children's developing identities. Most hoped, however, that any deficiencies could be corrected with time and strict Western education.

Ambiguous Identities: Children of the In Between

Growing up surrounded by Chinese playmates, nannies, and household staff meant that rural-dwelling Western children grew up with strong senses of cultural fusion. It gave them unique positions of power within the colonial order. The skills and specialized knowledge gained from their diverse cultural associations thrust foreign children into the role of cultural intermediary and allowed them to assume positions of greater social importance than their peers in the metropole. Because early exposure to the Chinese language meant that most MKs grew up with at least a juvenile command of local languages, they found it easy to communicate with native servants and were often able to discover information that was beyond the reach of Western adults.[114] Such

[114] Helen Nowack Frame. Interview by Paul Ericksen. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, September 9, 1983. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

children could "play both sides" and act as go-betweens in the domestic sphere. The ability to speak local languages fluently even made it possible for children to gain relatively unfettered access to members of the upper class, an economic demographic with whom adult missionaries had less contact.[115] Their specialized knowledge of both East and West and their status as perceived "innocents" also meant they could breach barriers that their parents often struggled to overcome.

Taking advantage of their children's multicultural appeal, many parents actually chose to defy isolationist dogma by using MKs to attract converts. Foreign children had long been a source of fascination for the Chinese public because of their rarity outside of treaty ports and boarding schools. As the most vulnerable members of the authoritative foreign class, they also represented something of a contradiction in terms and were perceived as being cute, harmless, and, thus, more approachable than their parents. Thus, Western children could be highly effective proselytizing tools in the countryside. The Elliot sisters both spoke of frequently accompanying their father on business trips to distribute bible tracts. Ruth explained that whenever she accompanied her father into a village, they would "have a crowd in no time just because [their] father took [his] children with him." A huge uproar would usually ensue, with loud cries of "foreign devil, foreign devil" following in their wake. Such racial epitaphs would attract local kids first, and they would almost immediately be joined by curious parents. Once a decent crowd had gathered, Ruth's father would start handing out tracts and preaching sermons.[116] Exposing children to these kinds of spectacles of mass adoration and gawking further conditioned them to feel exotic, unique, and powerful.

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[115] Daniel H Bays, *Christianity in China: from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).
[116] Elliot.

Although growing up surrounded by Chinese playmates, nannies, and household staff gave rural-dwelling MKs stronger connections with their Chinese environment, it also made it much more difficult for them to fit into either culture. Their native understanding of both English and local Chinese languages, while useful, also set them apart in foreign and Chinese communities and often led to feelings of alienation. As Robert Brainerd Ekvall explained, it was common for MKs to feel somewhat embarrassed of their parents' inferior language skills no matter their level of fluency. Missionary parents never lost their foreign accents, while children had no accents to speak of. Ekvall recalled sitting through his father's sermons, squirming in embarrassment at awkward phrasing and pronunciation.[117] MKs' intimate understandings of Chinese society further reinforced these feelings of cultural estrangement.

The lessons children learned from Chinese caregivers and playmates often contradicted the teachings of their Western parents, making it difficult to reconcile such widely different world views. Children often compartmentalized Western teachings, choosing to ignore them when in the presence of Chinese companions. In Helen Gignilliat Torrey Renich's oral history, this pattern is especially evident. She remembered being so envious of bound feet as a child that she had her Chinese nanny bind her own feet for a day.[118] Even though her devout Christian parents had impressed upon her the religious and medical objections to foot binding, Renich still viewed bound feet as graceful and went behind their backs to gain intimate knowledge of the practice. This is an excellent embodiment of the cultural and moral contagion of which foreign

[117] Robert Brainerd Ekvall. Interview by Robert Schuster. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, October 11, 1979. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.
[118] Helen Gignilliat Torrey Renich. Interview by Robert Shuster. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, May 15, 1980. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

parents lived in fear. Renich's conception of female beauty had been so greatly influenced by Chinese ideals that she chose to engage in a practice her peers in the metropole would have universally abhorred. Such stories of identity confusion are not uncommon in the oral histories and were clear indicators of the cultural ambiguity that typified expat childhoods in treaty port China. Playing the role of cultural intermediary often led to far-reaching problems in identity formation.

Children raised in the midst of this cultural fusion usually had difficulty with repatriation and suffered varying degrees of culture shock upon returning "home." Several of the oral history subjects admitted feeling disconnected and confused upon repatriation, and while most were able to acclimate within a few months or years, some were constantly plagued by feelings of alienation. The most common obstacles to acclimation were the MKs' ignorance of Western technology, consumerism, and pop culture. Most of these children had no practical knowledge of telephones or electricity. Others had difficulty adjusting to common teenage pastimes like eating out, going to the movies, or attending dances.[119] After spending their childhoods with strict limits on social interaction, being suddenly thrust into wider and more dynamic social spheres was quite shocking.

Another factor that made it difficult for children to acclimate was the racial makeup of Western societies. Being a part of the racial and cultural majority for the first time in their lives forced many children to reevaluate the basis for their own identities. Returning to the West meant that they were suddenly no longer treated as superstars in public, and many oral history subjects expressed shock that people no longer followed

[119] Doris Embery. Interview by Robert Shuster. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, April 20, 1982. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

them around or stared at them in public. Margaret Crossett felt it strange that her childhood experiences had not left more indelible marks on her physical appearance, recalling that "when we came home when I was eleven, we were living in California and some woman asked me, 'Have you lived here all your life?' And I looked at her. I just thought I looked Chinese enough to know that people would know I hadn't lived there all my life."[120] Crossett, like many expat children, had drawn much of her identity from living as a racial minority in China. Joining the racial majority in the metropole meant that Western identity no longer hinged upon physical appearance or a system of racial binaries. This concept was entirely foreign to expat children.

The bourgeois nature of domestic and school life for foreigners in China also made it difficult for children to repatriate. Domestic realities in China differed greatly with those in the West. Although foreign children were born to middle-class and lower middle-class parents, they often grew up in households full of bourgeois luxuries. While many missionary parents found the necessity of maids, cooks, gatekeepers, nannies, and gardeners distasteful to the Christian ethic of humble service, MKs had no such qualms. For them, it was quite natural to occupy the top rungs of colonial society. Thus, some of them confessed to great culture shock upon realizing that the majority of their neighbors were in a similar economic class. School realities in China were also shockingly different from those in the metropole. Because of mission-paid school subsidies, all of the oral history subject under investigation here were able to attend exclusive foreign boarding schools. As we have seen, these schools were obsessed with the welfare of their students. Every pupil was special and treasured. Such a high caliber of education would have been

[120] Margaret Rice Elliot Crossett. Interview by Robert Schuster. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, November 16, 1984. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL

beyond MKs, had they been raised in the metropole. Suddenly finding themselves in blasé public schools after repatriation would have been quite a shock to their bourgeois sensibilities.

Growing up in China left such deep impacts on MKs that they often identified more with China's expat community than their own countrymen in the metropole. The reasons for this can be traced back to two main factors: multicultural childhoods and international schooling. Most of the oral history subjects entered Western boarding schools after spending their early years mixing freely with servants and Chinese playmates. The multicultural identities they developed early on was nourished and magnified in China's highly isolated boarding schools despite the best efforts of teachers and school boards. School administrators went to great lengths to give children authentically British or American upbringings, and their curriculums often mirrored those of schools in the metropole. Bigger schools like those in Chefoo and Lushan catered to specific nationalities, and most institutions refused to admit mixed-race pupils. These strategies of isolationism and cultural immersion were meant to inculcate children raised in multicultural settings with clear national identities. Instead, they simply reified feelings of cultural fusion. It can be argued that, contrary to colonial isolationist doctrine, international schools posed just as great a threat to a child's sense of national identity as Chinese culture. Harold Paul Adolph argued that attending international schools and only having expat friends was often more confusing in the long term, explaining that "Those who [went] that particular route usually end[ed] up so identified with the country that they [had] a very hard time breaking that without very special help."[121] Concentrating

[121] Harold Paul Adolph. Interview by Dan Mercer. Tape Recording. Wheaton, IL, January 14, 1981. Billy Graham Center Archives in Wheaton, IL.

China-raised children in tight-knit, highly isolated school systems caused children to define their identities in relation to one another. For such children, multiculturalism was the new normal, and living as a foreign expat in China was home.

Conclusion

While isolationist practices were fairly successful at protecting the integrity of Western bodies and morals, they actually had the opposite effect on children's developing identities. Segregating children from Chinese servants and playmates in the domestic sphere simply was not practical, and this meant that, by the time children began formal schooling, they had already spent several formative years in culturally ambiguous environments. Isolationism did not prepare them to lead adult lives in America or Britain. Boarding school isolationism actually helped perpetuate China's foreign community by producing highly moral adults with ambiguous national identities. As a result, almost all of the oral history subjects discussed here went on to become lifelong expats, with five returning to China as missionaries themselves.

CONCLUSION

This study began from an inquiry into the isolationist childrearing strategies of Westerners living in treaty port China between 1881 and 1937. It argued that China's foreign community adopted an extreme form of isolationist theory to shield its children from perceived threats posed by the Chinese environment. The greatest goal of isolationist childrearing and education was to simulate an entirely Western environment capable of producing young adults whose bodies, morals, and identities were indistinguishable from those of their peers in the metropole. This thesis worked off of the premise that morality and identity were inseparably connected with ideas of health in colonial settings. Thus, these traits were protected with the same fierceness as physical health. In order to illustrate this argument, this thesis traced the evolution of health concepts in China's foreign community, from theories blaming climate and miasma for the spread of disease to modern germ theory. Because of its focus on the symbiotic relationship between individuals, neighbors, and communities, the advent of hygienic theory magnified anxieties about childhood contamination. Since expats had little power to enact city-wide or province-wide health ordinances under the extraterritoriality system, they instead chose to embrace strategies of supra-isolationism. By examining the case of Chefoo School, we saw how international boarding schools acted as testing grounds for modernity in which theories on health were proposed and further developed. Children

took British standardized tests, received frequent and prolonged religious instruction, and were strictly supervised by Western teachers and physicians.

This tendency toward strict regulatory practices and Western indoctrination was further addressed during the case study of the 1902 Chefoo School Calamity. This watershed moment in the school's theoretical development showed how the spectacular failure of outdated medical procedures and hygienic practices brought about a shift in isolationist theory and application. The Calamity shattered many illusions within the foreign community and caused a great deal of anxiety over boarding school safety. If such a disaster could arise in Chefoo, long-renowned as one of the safest, most healthful regions in China, it followed that something must be terribly wrong with the isolationist health system. The widely publicized trial following the Calamity inspired lively public debate and forced people to reevaluate the relationship between institutions and the individual. This thesis argued that modern understandings of health and hygiene at the turn of the century widened the purview of Chinese boarding schools by encouraging them to take a more intrusive approach with pupils. This new imaging of the responsibilities of institutions led boarding schools like Chefoo to adopt stronger administrative approaches to isolationism. Strict supervision of both Western students and Chinese staff became paramount. The Calamity brought Chefoo School into the 20th century and made the school into a shining example of colonial isolationist theory.

In order to gain a more nuanced view of treaty port isolationism, this study also investigated its practical application by turning to the domestic sphere. By examining eight different oral histories of missionary kids raised in China, it found that isolationist theory performed much differently in expat homes. Outside of regimented institutions, it

was not feasible to segregate children so strictly. Children were usually allowed to interact with carefully vetted playmates—usually the offspring of upper-class Chinese or Christian servants. This sort of early exposure to multicultural society coupled with the isolating nature of boarding school life made it impossible for children to develop strong British or American identities. By growing up as members of an exclusivist minority population, Western children were socialized to develop strong expat identities. This idea hearkens back to the arguments made by Dane Kennedy in *Islands of White*.[122] Growing up with this sort of identity made it difficult for expat children to repatriate and empathize with peers in the metropole. Thus, although isolationist theory's main goal was to prevent all forms of cultural impurity in children, it actually ensured that they were forever marked by their time in China. The treaty port lifestyle was never capable of supporting true and complete isolationism.

This thesis leaves much room for future research. It would be particularly interesting to do a more in-depth study into how bourgeois colonial perceptions affected childrearing strategies. The nature of the colonial system allowed parents to invest great care into the development of their children. Such money and time intensive childrearing was both uncommon and highly impractical for working class members of Western society. How did missionary parents adjust to their new bourgeois reality in China, and what were their economic goals for their children? While some parents tried to use the system to slingshot their children into a higher, permanent social class, others encouraged their children to become missionaries themselves.

Because of the sources involved, this study deals largely with missionary children, but it would be enlightening to examine merchant children in greater detail. Did class

[122] Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939.*

divides between the two types of pupils affect their health or level of isolation? Perhaps it was easier for merchant children to repatriate because merchant communities experienced less turnover and social upheaval than missionary communities. As members of the middle class in the metropole, Merchant parents were, in all probability, more adept at handling their suddenly elevated social statuses in treaty port China. As a result, their children likely enjoyed a much smaller disruption to their social status upon repatriation.

More research studying the Boxer Rebellion and the way it influenced evolving theories of segregation would also not go astray. The antiforeign movement caused great disruptions in China's foreign community, creating an overwhelming sense of powerlessness. In the primary sources, the missionary community had complicated, greatly nuanced reactions to the conflict. It had to find ways of coping with overwhelming loss without burning bridges in the native community. Because the rebellion had a strong anti-Christian element to it, victims were often assigned the appellation of martyr. The stories of children martyrs were used to encourage living children to embrace Christ and lead moral Christian lives.[123] By using the term martyr, the foreign community was able to facilitate a strong feeling of shared-struggle. This thesis has argued that the Boxer Rebellion and its aftermath partially led to the great segregationist reforms at the turn of the century. Part of the reason for this was that it drew the foreign community together more tightly than ever before. If the Boxer Rebellion had such a transformative and unifying effect upon foreign cohesion, how did other such violent political conflicts affect the foreign community and ideas of segregation? During the period under investigation here, China spent several years, off and on, in states of political and social chaos. Foreign powers, with their limited

[123] China Inland Mission, "Two Child Martyrs of Shansi," *China's Millions* (1901): 35.

sovereignty, were incapable of ensuring long-term stability. It would be fascinating to track how segregation ebbed and flowed with changes in the political landscape.

In this thesis, we have explored many aspects of the isolationist childhood, but there is still much to be discovered about colonial childhoods. There is also plenty of room in the historiography for more comparative studies on colonial childhoods. Because they often lived far from their parents, children were fairly frequent letter writers. Collections of family letters will therefore provide us with a veritable goldmine of primary source material. Writing about the potential applications for children studies, Paula Fass has argued that children will become much more visible in histories because of patterns of world globalization.[124] As national boundaries blur, we will likely see more multinational histories of children. A history of colonial childhoods throughout the British Empire, for example, would shed much light upon the ways in which British settlers related to various regional environments. And a history comparing colonial childhoods in China and India could have much to say about semicolonialism and the exercise of medical power.

[124] Paula Fass, "The World is at Our Door: Why Historians of Children and Childhood Should Open Up," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008).

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